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ZARDOZI

GLITTERING GOLD EMBROIDERY

Charu Smita Gupta

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Gold has been used in fabric decoration in a variety of ways. The shimmering patterns of gold embroidery interspersed with silk threads, semi-precious stones, etc. give the illusion of gold ornaments on the body of the wearer.

Zardozi—the traditional art of court embroidery—is the sheer magic of nimble fingers and imaginative designs, envisaged by the ensemble of lustrous metallic wire which was traditionally the silver wire coated/plated with gold, silk threads, beads and stones. The lustre of gold has been successfully retained in the polypropylene wire. The tradition of gold embroidery continues despite countless vicissitudes. Innovative uses of traditional skills have given *zardozi* a new identity and fresh lease of life, rediscovering its exquisite past.

Designers of evening wears and marriage outfits for brides find ample use of this meticulous embroidery in the colourful patterns.

The book attempts to trace the history of *zardozi*, its traditional manifestors, the *zardoz*, in the context of the survival of the production system—the *karkhana*, the social system, the formal, non-formal and craft education of the children in *zardoz* community, the techniques and most importantly the design and forms.

The book is a useful guide for those having keen interest in traditional Indian textiles, anthropologists, museologists, promoters of craft education and the pace-setting designers.

Rs. 2100

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7. A folio of painting in Persian style, Sheikh Sanah and Christian Maiden, shows resplendent use of gold decorations.

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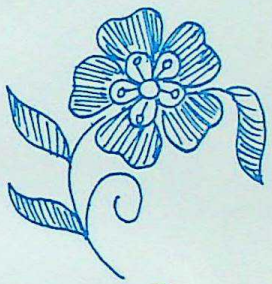

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GLITTERING GOLD EMBROIDERY

Charu Smita Gupta

राजकीय संग्रहालय
ग्रन्थसंख्या.....
प्राप्ति तिथि 24.2.97
विभाग.....
श्रेणी.....
STATE MUSEUM, LUCKNOW.

First Published in India 1996

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IMPORTANT ZARDOZI CENTRES OF INDIA

Jammu & Kashmir		
Punjab	: Patiala	
Delhi		
Uttar Pradesh	: Agra	
	Farrukhabad	
	Kanpur	
	Lucknow	
	Banaras	
	Ramnagar	
	Meerut	
	Bareilly	
Bihar	: Patna	
Rajasthan	: Jaipur	
	Jodhpur Jaisalmer	
Gujarat	: Ahmedabad Bikaner	
	Surat Junagadh	
	Baroda Kutch	
Madhya Pradesh	: Bhopal	
	Burhanpur	
	Ujjain	
	Gwalior	
Maharashtra	: Bombay	
	Aurangabad	
	Paithan	
Andhra Pradesh	: Hyderabad	
Karnataka	: Dharwar	
	Gulbargah	
West Bengal	: Calcutta	
Dacca		
Sind		

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PREFACE

Way back in 1976, I joined on the staff of the then Crafts Museum. Walking through the galleries, my attention was drawn to the gold-embroidered *achkan*. I looked through the reference materials in the library but there was not much information on this fabric art form or technique. Cognitive attitude towards arts and artefacts was in bud. I was inspired by Professor Amita Ray to study this craft in the holistic, historical approach. Her constant encouragement culminated in a doctoral thesis.

This monograph is the consequence of the research undertaken for the purpose, furthered by my association with Victoria and Albert Museum, London, as an academic visitor.

The study has revealed that zardozi, the medieval craft manifested as the embroidered work initially in gold and silver threads, has a continuous history of nearly five hundred years, surviving till today. The monograph attempts to reflect the changes that have taken place with the vicissitudes of time. The study reveals interestingly that the evolution of craft in its efforts to sustain itself in the changing environment has motivated and moulded the skills of the artisans. Conventional forms of the overgarments, wall hangings, floor spreads, the trappings of the animals used by the kings and the rich aristocrats have been replaced by the smaller items of costume decorations, ornamental panels and a large variety of miscellanies, finding a ready acceptance in the other cultures.

The historical dimension of such adornment establishes a link between the craftwork and the user. The craft which prospered centring around the courts of Sultans, Mughals, provincial rulers, subordinate courts of Hindus and British, changed its manifested appearance by slowly permeating the upper strata of the society. The prominent users thus in the Independent India were the elite groups within the country and abroad.

The source materials for retracing the entire gamut of history are adequately supported with the colour illustrations taken from the miniature paintings, as well as the actual specimens. The craft is still thriving in many pockets and is an important trend-setter in the presentday export market. Therefore, the oral history and traditions found current among the artisans provide an important turning point.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

A.A.	American Anthropologist
A.E.	American Ethnologist
A.I.H.B.	All India Handicrafts Board
B.M.	Burlington Magazine
C.A.	Current Anthropology
C.C.P.I.	Conservation of Cultural Property in India
E.F.C.S.	Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society
G.O.I.	Government of India
I.E.T.J.	Indian Export Trade Journal
I.G.I.	Imperial Gazetteer of India
I.J.C.S.	International Journal of Comparative Sociology
J.A.R.	Journal of Anthropological Research
J.E.G.	Journal of Embroideries Guide
J.I.A.	Journal of Indian Art
J.I.A.I.	Journal of Indian Art and Industry
J.I.S.O.A.	Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art
J.I.T.H.	Journal of Indian Textile History
J.M.S.U.B.	Journal of the M.S. University of Baroda
J.P.A.	Journal of Persian Art
J.R.A.I.	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute
J.R.A.S.	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society
J.R.I.P.S.	Journal of Royal Indian & Pakistan Society
J.U.P.H.S.	Journal of U.P. Historical Society
M.M.	Marg Magazine
n.d.	no date
N.T.	Needle and Thread
O.A.	Oriental Art
Pl.	Plate
T.T.P.P.	Today and Tomorrow's Printers and Publishers, New Delhi
T.T.P.R.	The Town Planning Review
V.A.M.I.S.	Victoria and Albert Museum Indian Section

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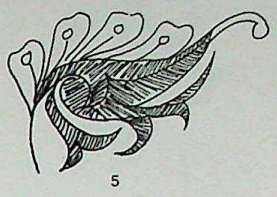

I wish to express my profound gratitude to Professor Amita Ray for her valuable guidance and constant encouragement.

I had a chance meeting with Dr. Deborah Swallow, Keeper Indian Section, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1989, in New Delhi. She provided me academic visitorship at Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in early 1990 to study the *zardozi* collection in the Indian section of Victoria and Albert Museum. I am especially indebted to her for providing me with this opportunity.

I also extend my thanks to Rose Mary Crill, Susan Strong, Veronica Murphy and Graham Martin of Victoria and Albert Museum.

Thanks are due to Dr. R.C. Sharma, Shri D.N. Saraf and Dr. M.K. Pal who gave useful advice. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Daljeet and Smt. Krishna Lal for allowing me to study the collections in their charge. Shri Naseem Akhtar, Smt. Jasleen Dhamija for discussions and Smt. Pratibha Parasher for constant support.

I am happy to acknowledge graciousness and generosity of the authorities at Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) National Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum, Salarjung Museum, Red Fort Museum under Archaeological Survey of India, Indian Museum, Calico Museum of Textiles, Lucknow State Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, National Museum for providing me research facilities and many personal friends who allowed me to see the family wardrobe.

Delhi, the capital of the nation, has this art in its groove. *Zardoz*, the skilled artisans and their families living here for generations were lavishly generous with their time and most helpfully answered all my queries. This document is as valuable for them as for me.

Affectionate appreciations are also due to Dr. Umesh Kumar whose unstinting support has seen this book through print and our daughters.

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CREDITS

The photographs pertaining to National Museum are taken by Shri R. K. Dutta Gupta.

Other photographs are by the author. Author is thankful to India Magazine for allowing to use the text and photographs published there by the author.

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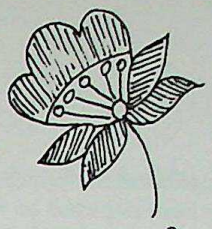

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cms. These are attached to the plain shawl. Punjab, Mid 19th Century. Acc. No. 0243. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.

82. *Doshala* polychrome wool, fabric embroidered mainly in *kairi* bel surrounded by dense foliage in individual stripes of fabric, which are stitched diligently with gold and silver *kalabatoon*. Kashmir, Mid 19th Century. Acc. No. 9642. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
83. *Satbanteli*, the head veil with red tie-dye dots on black woollen fabric, is generally worn after birth of the first child, male gender of the new born is announced by the *zardozi* embroidery on the part of veil which covers the head and the running borders. Unlike *doshala shawl*, here the design is manifested on the portion covering the head. Gold (*kora, dabka, gijai*) wire spangles. Kutch, Gujarat. Mid 20th Century. Acc. No. 5/203. Courtesy: Crafts Museum, New Delhi.
84. *Chunri* crepe georgette, gold wire of various varieties, *kora, chikna, dabka, gijai.* Delhi, Contemporary.
85. *Odhani*, the head veil, *kinkhab* fabric worked with gold *gijai* wire, *katori, tikona sitare*, beetle wings. Hyderabad. Mid 19th Century. Acc. No. 551759. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
86. *Dupatta*, net, beetle wings, gold *gijai* wire. Hyderabad. Early 19th Century. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
87. Neck scarf wool, gold, *kalabatoon*. Kashmir, Mid 20th Century. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
88. Folio from Persian style painting narrating story of Sheikh Sanah and Christian Maiden. Circa 1595 A.D. Acc. No. 61.577. Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi.
89. Shah Shuja, son of Shahjahan, Mughal painting exemplar of costume and accessories ornated with *zardozi*. Circa 1680 A.D. Acc. No. 76.559. Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi.
90. Ragaputra Mewar, the second son of Raja Malkausa, Deccan school of painting, here the costume shows gold decorations. Circa Mid 19th Century. Acc. No. 89.279. Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi.
91. *Angarkha*, wool, satin fabric, gilded wire of *kora, badla, gijai, dabka* varieties, gold sequin, pearls and semi-precious stones. The red wool *angarkha* seems to belong to the noble court of Udaipur. However, there is assimilation of two distinct textile traditions. The base fabric is woven in *kani* tradition of Kashmir; the *zardozi* embroidery is done on blue satin band which is stitched on the borders and edges. Rajasthan, Late Mid 19th Century. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
92. *Bugalbandi*, a tight fitting ladies costume, stitched with a wool fabric quilted with cotton padding and taffata lining. The embroidery with gilded wire is confined to neck, back, slits. Delhi, Mid 19th Century. Acc. No. 4563. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
93. *Angarkha*, red wool fabric with profuse *zardozi* embroidery on back, waist-band with gold *kalabatoon*, gold braid, silk thread. Lahore, Early 19th Century. Acc. No. 05643. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
94. Front view of No. 93.
95. *Achkan*, wool, gold *kalabatoon*, silk. The concentration of embroidery is mainly around the front bodice and border of sleeves and lower ends. The body however has *ari* (slanting) designs. Lahore, Early 19th Century. Acc. No. IPN 2618. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
96. *Choga* on wool fabric, worked with gold *kalabatoon* in *hath ari* technique, variegated forms of *kairi* motif, has dense embroidery on front and back yoke, the rest of the

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robe is covered with repetitive pattern of *panch patti ka phul* (five-petalled flower). Punjab, Late 18th Century. Acc. No. 10197. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.

97. Back detail of No. 96.
98. Body detail of No. 96.
99. Detail of a *choga* showing arrangement of *kairi* motif in *turanj* (corner), the border, the edges embroidered mainly in *hath ari* technique, using gold and silver *kalabatoon* and *badla* on wool base. Punjab, Late 19th Century. Acc. No. 2513. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
100. The body of the *choga* at No. 99 has linear *kairi* motifs arranged on trailing stem.
101. Another detail of *choga* at No. 99 showing details of the buttons beneath the front yoke and an elongated *surahi buti*.
102. *Abho* cotton fabric, gold silver wire, *badla*, floss silk, semi-precious stones, sequin embroidery on front yoke and shoulders. Gujarat, Early 20th Century. Acc. No. 5859. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
103. Detail of design on shoulder of No. 102.
104. Detail of design on front yoke No. 102.
105. *Chaubagla*, man's upper garment worked with gold, silver wire, beetle wings, sequins, linear trailing creeper design in *kamdani* technique. The borders, the cuffs, the edges of the front opening, waist-belt, neck and shoulder edges have appliqued *patti* in *karchobi* technique. Hyderabad, Mid 18th Century. Acc. No. 65/XXIV. Courtesy: Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad, A.P. (B&W)
106. *Choga*, green wool fabric embroidered with polychrome silk thread with *ari*. The outlines of each motif are embellished with gold *kalabatoon* in same technique. There is a running border on cuffs, neckline, border in red wool which also has trailing creeper design in gold *kalabatoon*. The lining of this *choga* is in Yarkand silk with beautiful *ikat* pattern. Delhi, Mid 19th Century. Acc. No. 85-1898. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
107. Coat, blue satin, gold wire of *kora chikna dabka gijai* sequin showing European influence, however has embroidery span much in conventional *choga* style. The bands embroidered beforehand are stitched on the cuffs, shoulder neck, front and back yoke, border and back seams. Rajasthan, Mid 20th Century. Acc. No. 4561. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
108. Miniature folio from Ragmala series depicting ragini Vinod. Deccan, Early 18th Century Golkunda. Acc. No. 87/1219. Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi.
109. *Lahenga*, silk, gold silver *zari*, gold *kalabatoon*. Delhi, Early 20th Century. Acc. No. 247/1920. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
110. *Ghaghra*, silk, gold *kalabatoon* sequin. Gujarat, Early 20th Century. Courtesy: Crafts Museum, New Delhi.
111. Design detail of No. 110. The border has *sivarge ki buti* and followed by *chandni buti* creeper.
112. *Lahenga*, silk, with heavy *kamdani* work, using gold wire, sequin, silk thread. Delhi, Mid 20th Century. Courtesy: Crafts Museum, New Delhi. (B&W)
113. *Kurtani*, satin, fabric embroidered densely along neckline and border, the body has *ari bel* with *buti, kora, dabka, gijai, chikna* varieties of gilded wire along with sequin and silk are used. Delhi, Mid 20th Century. Courtesy: Crafts Museum, New Delhi. (B&W)
114. *Kurti* of red velvet embroidered with gold wire sequins. The variety of wires used is *gijai, dabka, kora*. The embroidery is confined to the neck collar, cuffs of the sleeves, bodice and thehem. The motifs are repeatedly floral. The centre of the bodice has a peacock spreading out in floral motifs. The corner of the hem has

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kalinga motif. Delhi, Mid 20th Century. Acc. No. 135-1964. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.

115. *Choli Lahenga,* the upper part of the long flared skirt is *choli,* made from multicoloured silk panels. The innermost panel, orange in colour, has *zari* embroidery. Three metallic buttons enhance the beauty. It is stitched to the skirt here but normally is a separate dress. Rajasthan, Early 19th Century. Acc. No. 05686. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
116. *Kanchali,* the short, well-fitting bodice for women tailored by stitching three square and two triangular pieces of fabric to form the front part. The back and sleeves of the costume are of two running semi-circular shapely cut and stitched fabrics. Here each of the pieces was embroidered separately keeping in view the flow of design. Each of the seams is covered with gold braid. The front has elaborate *guldasta* motifs, while the back is ornately decorated with *ari bel.* Two sets of strings, one at the neck, the other at the waist, are used to tie the *kanchali.* Rajasthan, Early 20th Century. Acc. No. 9647/4007. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
117. Back view of No. 116.
118. Jacket, velvet gold wire gold braid. Hyderabad, Mid 19th Century. Acc. No. 018. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
119. Jacket, velvet gold wire. The tight-fitting jacket worn by ladies of status has the design span in *choga* style. South India, Late 18th Century. Acc. No. 038. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
120. Jacket, nylon fabric, gold *kalabatoon.* Delhi, Mid 20th Century.
121. Front view of No. 120.
122. The folio from miniature painting of Shiraj shows varieties of turbans with gold work. Circa 1595 A.D. Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi.
123. Crown, red velvet, cardboard, gold, silver wire sequin. Uttar Pradesh, Mid 19th Century. Acc. No. 0339. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
124. Turban, red velvet, cardboard, beads, gold silver wire sequins. Acc. No. 5776. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
125. *Topi,* the circular cap worn by upper class Hindu boys popularly known as *kadi hui topi* (embroidered cap). This cap is from Brahmin family. Delhi, Mid 20th Century.
126. *Mandel,* the circular cap worn by trader community. Early 20th Century. Acc. No. 0350. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
127. *Topi,* blue velvet base, the circular rim has creeper embroidery, while plain round top has a *buta* showing *lot ka phul, ded khar ki patti* and other conventional *zardozi* motifs. Delhi, Mid 20th Century.
128. *Mandel,* highly ornated cap showing *khoshe, khairi, surajmukhi, nakhuni* designs. Velvet on cardboard, *kora, dabka, chikna, gijai* wires, semi-precious stones. Courtesy: Lucknow State Museum.
129. *Mandel.* Here the span of design is much in the same pattern as at No. 127 except that the upper surface is also laid with sequins. North India, Early 20th Century. Acc. No. 0370. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
130. Cap showing typical *zardozi* motifs (front view), gold silver wire, sequins. Acc. No. 84/1/XXIV. Courtesy: Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad, A.P. (B&W)
131. Back view of the same. (B&W)
132. Detail of No. 5. Courtesy: Victoria & Albert Museum (I.S.), London.
133. *Juti,* plastic wire, beads. Delhi, Late 20th Century.
134. Curtain, velvet, gold, silver wire, sequins. Narsimha temple, Yadgiri-gutta, Distt. Nalgonda, Andhra Pradesh. 20th Century.

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135. *Purdah*, satin, massive *zardozi*. Vrindavan, Mathura, Late 20th Century.
136. Detail of the central panel of No. 135 where an architectural detail of a temple is depicted in embroidery. Vrindavan, Mathura, Late 20th Century.
137. Meghnath — Ravana's son, red puppet with *zardozi* on *mukut* and costume. West Bengal, Late 20th Century. Courtesy: Sangeet Natak Academy, New Delhi.
138. Raja Bhoj, the rod puppet of prominent king shows elaborate headgear and costume with *zari* work. West Bengal, Late 20th Century. Courtesy: Sangeet Natak Academy, New Delhi.
139. Costume worn by Kumbhakarna for Chhau *nach*. Purulia, West Bengal, Late 20th Century. Courtesy: Sangeet Natak Academy, New Delhi.
140. *Asur*, the ferocious nature of the character has been admirably expressed in the *zari* work (mask). The three-dimensional effect is brought by inserting raised cardboard, wherever required. Ram Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. Courtesy: Sangeet Natak Academy, New Delhi.
141. Ravana, the ten heads of Ravana had been depicted by elevation and facial feature depiction on a long cardboard panel with *zari* wire and *zari* fabric. The eyes are done with thread while actual hair are used to depict moustache. Ram Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. Courtesy: Sangeet Natak Academy, New Delhi.
142. Several designs and forms of purses with *zardozi*. Delhi, Late 20th Century. (B&W)
143. Purses with *meenakari* work, these are accessories with evening wear. Delhi, Late 20th Century.
144. *Zardoz* girl posing to show the fashion accessories, the belt and purse. Delhi, Late 20th Century.
145. *Pankha*, satin fabric, gold wire, semi-precious stones. The semi-circular fan has frill around wider end. The straight end has a groove along the length to insert the handle. Delhi, Mid 19th Century. Courtesy: Red Fort Museum, New Delhi.
146. *Pankha*, green and maroon silk fabric on border and centre, embroidered in *buta* and *bel* motif. A silver handle is fixed along the straight length. Delhi, Mid 20th Century. Courtesy: Crafts Museum, New Delhi.
147. *Pankha*, velvet showing *dokh* work in geometric pattern. The motifs seen are *nakhuni, tin nargis*, along with *barfi ki jali* on the border. The centre has repeated *buti* of *tin nakhuni* placed under semi-circular arch, *kalabatoon* wire. Rajasthan, Early 20th Century. Courtesy: Bharany Collection, New Delhi.
148. *Pankha*. This fan has minaret-like shape, shows the royal insignia of provincial court in the central part. Such fans were hung with ropes and pulled with strings. Rajasthan, Early 20th Century. Courtesy: Bharany Collection, New Delhi.
149. Jain miniature painting showing religious symbols. Circa 1500 A.D. Acc. No. 77.218. Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi.
150. *Pothi pitari*, gold silver wire, sequin, silk fabric, cardboard. Gujarat, Early 20th Century. Courtesy: Crafts Museum, New Delhi.
151. *Gomukhi*, silk fabric, gold silver wire, sequins. Gujarat, Early 20th Century. Courtesy: Crafts Museum, New Delhi.
152. The *tugra* placed in a niche in *zardoz* household. Delhi, Late 20th Century.
153. *Tugra*, velvet with Allahu embroidered in *zardozi*. Delhi, Late 20th Century.
154. An *ayat* from Kuran, the religious text. Delhi, Late 20th Century.
155. *Hukka* farshi, velvet, gold wire sequin. W. Bengal, Early 19th Century. (B&W)
156. Tie case, satin silk, *zari*. The embroidered satin fabric is fixed on the lid of a wooden box to be used as tie case.

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157. Fashion accessories like bangles, studs, hair clips etc. with polyester wire and bead. Delhi, Late 20th Century. Courtesy: Victoria J. Rivers.
158. *Bisat* for *chopad*, the spread for playing the popular traditional board game *chopad*. Velvet, embroidered with gilt thread, spangles and beetle wings. It has four arms, each of the arms has 24 squares. These arms meet in the centre to form a central square. The spaces in between the arms have *panch karan aur neem ki patti ka buta* (five flowers and neem leaves) admired by a pigeon on each side. The *bisat* has exquisite workmanship. Gujarat, 19th Century. Courtesy: Calico Museum, Ahmedabad. (B&W)
159. Taj with silver wire on velvet. Delhi, Late 20th Century.
160. Panel on silk fabric with *meenakari* in silk, gold silver wire. Here peacock, parrot and bulbul are seen on the branches of tree of life having variety of flowers and in the ground a lion is seen chasing a deer. The total effect of this embroidery is like a painting. Hyderabad, 19th Century. Acc. No. 79-39. Courtesy: Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad, A.P. (B&W)
161. Panel scenery shows a peacock amidst the foliage mainly in gold wire, on silk background. Cf. No. 160. Delhi, Late 20th Century.
162. A miniature folio showing the process of gold melting. Patiala school of painting, Circa Early 20th Century. Acc. No. 88.340/48. Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi.
163. Gold wire drawers from Yeola, Uttar Pradesh, Mid 19th Century. (B&W)
164. Gold wire drawers from Yeola, Uttar Pradesh, Mid 19th Century. (B&W)
165. Elaborate process of wire drawing adopted in Punjab. Mid 19th Century. (B&W)
166. Various varieties of metallic wire.
167. *Karchob* placed on *tipai*.
168. *Shamsharak* and *farad* when not in use.
169. *Zardoz* seen working with wire wrapped on *fatia* on a *karchob*. (B&W)
170. The *zardoz* using *hath ari*.
171. Detail of couching technique.
172. Detail of *vasli ka kam*.
173. Mohd. Farid and his wife working on *adda*, embroidering a *lahenga*.
174. Mohd. Farid, the *zardoz*, is seen picking up the *zari* wire in the needle.
175. *Zardoz* woman picking up wire.
176. Cutting the metallic wire in smaller pieces.
177. Position of craftsperson while working.
178. Another view.
179. Range of *buta* and *bel* designs.
180. Range of *buta* and *bel* designs.
181. *Gamla batua* designs.
182. A *zardoz* woman working on hearth in a domestic *karkhana*. (B&W)
183. Another hearth in the same premises. (B&W)
184. A child carrying the *karchob* from one household to another. (B&W)
185. *Zardoz* girl learning basics of the craft under supervision of her grandmother. (B&W)
186. *Zardoz* girl learning basics of the craft under supervision of her grandmother.
187. Two girls stitching the cloth on *shamsharak*.
188. *Karchob* fitted with cloth now ready for embroidery. (B&W)
189. Boys and girls working in domestic *karkhana*. (B&W)
190. *Sharara*, detail design (jacket cover).

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Line-drawings

1. *Gurde ke patte ka phul* (Kidney-shaped petal flower).
2. *Lot ka phul* (Five-petalled flower).
3. *Gurde ki kali ka phul* (A flower-like undeveloped kidney).
4. *Gurde ka phul* (Kidney-like flower).
5. *Dardar patte ke sath kairi* (Splitted leaves with paisley).
6. *Khairu ka phul tin kali ke sath* (Khairu flower with three buds).
7. *Gurde ka phul patte ke sath* (Kidney-shaped flower with leaves).
8. *Khairu ki dodi kali mila kar* (Khairu half-blossomed flower with bud).
9. Map showing important *zardozi* centres of India.
10. *Kamal phul patte ke sath* (Lotus flower with leaves).
11. *Pyale wala khairu ka phul* (Cup-like khairu flower).
12. *Lot ka phul, mudi patti* (Five-petalled flower with turned leaves).
13. *Pyale wala tin patti ka phul* (Cup-like three-petalled flower).
14. *Kamal ka phul* (Lotus flower).
15. *Chandni.*
16. *Sivarga.*
17. *Genda.*
18. *Gul khairu.*
19. *Khar wali nakhuni* (Splitted nail).
20. *Kairi* (Unripe mango).
21. *Pyale ki dodi* (Bud of cup-shaped flower).
22. *Kairi patti ke sang* (Unripe mango with leaves).
23. *Tin patti ka phul* (Three-petalled flower).
24. *Surajmukhi* (Sunflower).
25. *Neem ka patta* (Neem leaf).
26. *Khairu ki kali ka phul.*
27. *Surahi ka phul* (Flower shaped like Surahi).
28. *Guldaudi* (Chrysanthymum).
29. *Nakhuni* (Nail-like).
30. *Dardar patta* (Splitted leaf).
31. *Babiri.*
32. *Chameli* (Jasmine).
33. *Dedh wali nakhuni.*
34. *Nakhuni phul* (Flower with nail-like patterns).
35. *Sitare wali nargis.*
36. *Sivarga.*
37. *Lot ki dodi.*
38. *Gular ki kali.*
39. *Sivarga.*
40. *Panch kali ka phul.*
41. *Lot ka kairi patta.*
42. *Sitare ki kali.*
43. *Char patti ki kali.*
44. *Lot ka badam.*
45. *Lot ka patta.*
46. *Champa.*
47. *Do khar ka patta.*
48. *Chaukhana patta.*
49. *Lot ka khardar patta.*
50. *Lot ka dardar patta.*
51. *Do khar ka patta.*
52. *Julf kufl.*
53. *Falidar tehni.*
54. *Jau julf.*
55. *Chand ka phul.*
56. *Chameli ki jali.*
57. *Diamond ki jali.*
58. *Star ki jali.*
59. *Chakle wali jali.*
60. *Tent ki jali.*
61. *Suraj wali jali.*
62. *Burfi ki jali.*
63. *Tile wali jali.*
64. *Ring wali jali.*
65. *Kursi ki jali.*
66. *Ghundi wali jali.*
67. *Tanke wali jali.*
68. *Patte ki jali.*
69. *Nakhuni wali jali.*
70. *Patthar ki jali.*
71. *Chunti ki bharat.*
72. *Tanke bandi ka kam.*
73. *Do suiyo ki bharat.*
74. *Sitare ki bharat.*
75. *Chhalle wali bharat.*
76. *Kharkar bharat.*
77. *Maulsri ka phul.*
78. *Maulsri nargis ki buti.*
79. *Khare phali ki buti.*
80. *Har* design.
81. *Mukut* design.
82. *Double khairu ka phul.*
83. *Rakhi* design.
84. *Thali numa* design.
85. *Guldaudi ka gamla.*

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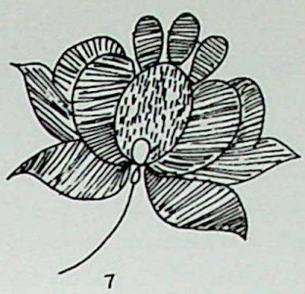


INTRODUCTION

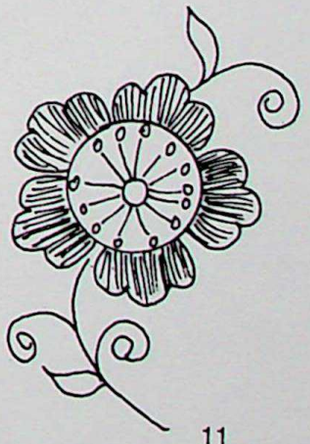
7

Gold has captured human attention since time immemorial. Being the noblest of all the metals gold has been used in a variety of ways for economic transactions. Accumulation of gold as a form of wealth is an age-long tradition.

Indian art and culture has prospered over the centuries and has witnessed both related and unrelated developments in several spectrums. Various mediums of expressive art such as painting, sculpture, carving, pottery, etc. have continued to be used by man to adorn or furnish the environment. These and several other mediums of expression evolved from the utilitarian and socio-religious paraphernalias. The fabric as a medium of expressive art has not remained unscathed. Fabric was basically developed to protect the human body from the vagaries of climatic conditions. The primary role of the fabric was thus to cover the human body. With the passage of time, aspirations led the fabric to the pathway of the decorative poems of designs. Since the fabric apart from protecting the human body adorned it, the body itself became the exhibit forum for the fabric art. Though there are few other mediums of art which can be thematically categorised for the adornment of human body like tattooing, jewellery, head coiffure, etc. but these are only complementary to the dynamic and functional dimensions of fabric art. Tattooing is technically an outgrowth of painting, whereas jewellery lacks the rhythm movement and flow of fabric. Here the line of the expressive craft evolving as an art form cuts through the environment, making the human body the manifest rostrum.

Gold has been used in fabric decoration in a variety of ways; painting the fabric with gold and silver pigments, decorating the fabric with embroidery and applique, weaving variegated patterns luxurious with gold thread, shimmering patterns painted, brocaded, embroidered using gold/silver thread interspersed with silk threads, precious stones, pigments, etc., give the illusion of gold ornaments on the body of the wearer.

This monograph intends to trace the history of a traditional craft community—*Zardoz*—the craftspersons working with gold wire, focusing on the development, interaction within the community and outside the community keeping their craft skill—*zardozi*—as the central point. *Zardozi* craft is a living craft and has had a long lease of life. As a matter of fact, by virtue of its continuation, all the components and processes of history which tend to change in space and time exposed *zardoz* community to varied influences in artistic forms and craft forms. These in turn highlighted the changing character of the socio-economic pattern of life of the crafts community. It is therefore quite legitimate to single out the changes as far as possible and analyse them in



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historical sequence. Our discussion of the study of *zardozi* which is commonly known as *salme sitare ka kam* legitimately opens with a survey and analysis of the history of this craft. This seems to have been much more important because the stream of this craft had once flowed around the court and nobilities and hence depended primarily on city-based social structure. Obviously, such setting had to pass through vicissitudes of varied historical forces accommodating different ideas and ideations, motifs and designs. The craftspersons living in the changing milieu quite naturally became adaptable to the altered requirements.

In the absence of documentary evidence, one cannot put forward a definite chronology of this craft. Our primary task therefore is to provide this craft a stable historical framework. Consequently, I have traced the beginning, maturity and disintegration of the craft in historical perspective and in terms of designs and forms. Also the evolution of the character of this craft work in relation to the pattern of contemporary life — social and economic — has been discussed. This point would lead us to believe that the appreciation of the luxury craft like *zardozi* raises a basic query about the possessors and patrons and their organised society, indicative of power, influence and refined taste. Thus the study of the relationship between the craftspersons and patrons seems to be a necessary step to appreciate the sense of function for such handwork. While studying the questions relating to the relationship between clienteles and the craftspersons vis-a-vis their craft work, we would notice, as we proceed, how the *zardozi* craft primarily had passed through three broad phases of activity — first, a stage when this was intended to be used by a major group of opulent population and hence was functionally cogent. In the second phase, with the decline of patronage of the affluent group (for historical reasons) it was deprived of its functional avenues. This consequently faced an upheaval and was increasingly dissipated. In the third phase with a reawakening, the craft sought a new direction, where it is found to have been controlled, both technically and commercially, by the persons belonging neither to the traditional crafts community nor usual patrons. In the last system a two-way mobility is noticed: on the one hand, some traditional families are found to have left the craft for the other occupations; on the other hand non-traditional craftspersons have adopted this craft as profession.

This obviously calls for a thorough analysis of the economics of manufacture of the craft, a system which fortunately continues till todate without much change. At this point the data collected through anthropological field-work is of immense importance. Delhi being an important centre of this craft since the Muslim rule remains even today a hub centre of such activities. Thus, a group of *zardoz* community is living here for centuries. An exploratory survey of the craftspersons living in old Delhi for obtaining objective information of their livelihood activities including their working condition is an essential prerequisite to know about the traditional pattern which the *zardoz* seem to follow even today.

It is expected that this monograph will be a contribution to the growing historical-anthropological account of a traditional craft and craftspersons of

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India. This study may be fruitfully compared with the studies of the other craft-communities practising the traditional skills.

Methodologically, I have pursued historical-anthropological approach. Historical data has been collected from literary sources and genealogical accounts maintained by some craftspersons. For anthropological data the locale chosen for the present study has been the seat of the last Mughal emperor, Shahjahanabad, where the *zardoz* communities have been living for centuries in clusters. The field-work lasted for about thirty-five months.

Fortunately, I could establish a very good rapport with the community through the cooperation of the female members of the craftspersons' families. The male members at the initial stage remained however very indifferent, at times even non-responsive. I used to maintain regular contact with them — with their occupational pattern — through regular visits. Needless to say that the standard anthropological tools like the schedules were used for collection of quantitative information on different aspects of the community. My close association with these people helped me to understand the process of slow and steady change that the people underwent since the Second World War and the independence of India. One can, by close scrutiny of their behavioural pattern, understand how the zardoz community of today indulges in the pious effort of sustaining the tradition and their age-old art of metal embroidery by reaching out towards new horizons in terms of designs, motifs, materials, etc.

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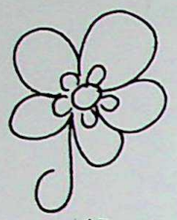
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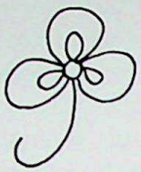
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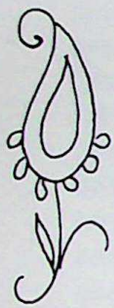
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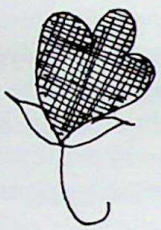
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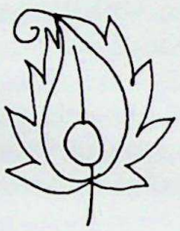
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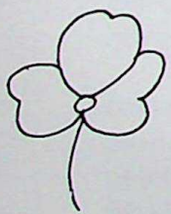
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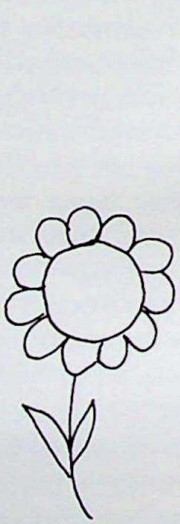
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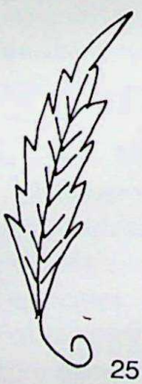
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HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRAFT

Fabrics ornated with gold suggest regal opulence evoking historic splendour. In any artefact and culture, the use of gold tends to symbolise wealth and power, the fabrics with *zardozi* are no exception. The oldest documentary evidence to what might have been the earliest artefacts embroidered in precious metal is to be found in the Vedic age. However, *zardoz*[1] as a class of artisans along with other artisans followed the footsteps of the sultanate conquerors in the twelfth century down the mountain passes of the Khyber on to the plains of Indian sub-continent. A popular myth is found among the *zardoz* of Delhi, relating to the origin of this craft. This runs as follows:

Once a mosquito found entrance to a king's head. The fluttering of this mosquito caused the king severe headache. Every kind of treatment had failed. Finally Paigamber himself advised the head hakim in his dream that the king would be cured of his headache if he is hit by a shoe in the area of pain. The hakim narrated his dream to his associates. They executed a plan. A shoe decorated with pure gold and silver threads was ordered to be made for the purpose. The king was hit with the shoe. This killed the mosquito, curing the king of his ailment. He appreciated the artistic outlay on the shoe and desired to patronise the work. Other emperors and nobles followed him.

Retracing the history we come across the mention of *hiranyan atkan*[2] which emphasises that the garments in the Vedic age were often embroidered with gold. Marut[3] is often described as wearing mantles adorned with gold. Usha[4] is described as wearing shining clothes, which were resplendent with gold. Apart from the unsewn garments which were general in those days, the Rigveda also refers to some words *atka,*[5] *drapi,*[6] *pesas*[7] indicating sewn garments. The term *atka* means a garment embroidered with gold thread.[8] Another word *hiranyair vyutarn*[9] signifies dresses worked with gold, reflecting like the sun. Rigvedic texts make innumerable allusions to such dresses which were worn by both men and women of high social ranking. References indicate this continuity in the epic period as well. *Swarnatantu nirmita,*[10] the word occurring in Valmiki Ramayana, means adorned by gold wire.

Adiparva[11] and *Sabhaparva*[12] of the Mahabharata give interesting accounts of costly clothes embroidered with gold. *Maharhavasthambra*[13] is a variety of costly robe mentioned at the time of marriage of the five Pandavas with Draupadi. The king of Kamboja is said to have presented Yudhishtara with many kinds of animal skins and woollen blankets all inlaid with threads of gold[14] during the rajasuya sacrifice ceremony (*jatarupa-parishkitan*).[15] During this ceremony the kings of Chola and Pandya countries also presented fine

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clothing studded with shining precious stones.[16] Even the gifts from Sinhal Desh were studded with precious stones.[17] All these accounts are indicative of the fact that royal courts were making frequent presentations of fabrics with gold and precious stone work.

Valmiki's Ramayana[18] speaks about *maharajatvasas,*[19] the clothes embroidered with gold and silver. Rama and Sita[20] were attired in yellow clothes (*ratnambar*) embroidered with gold thread and jewels when they went into exile. Dress of Ravana[21] is described as *maharhvastra sambaddh* and *maharajatvasas* indicating that the kingly costumes were expensive. *Maharshaum sanvit* is another reference[22] in the same text implying the embroidery of fine expensive clothes. All these references indicate beyond doubt that embroidered costumes worked in gold, silver and precious stones were part of opulent tradition during the epic period. Vyasa also makes this observation in his accounts.[23] This tradition seems to have extended to greater India.[24]

No textual reference is available in support of the existence of this craft during the lull after the epic period. Panini, however, refers to a kind of silken cloth named *koseyya*[25] signifying possibly the fabric adorned with gold. Buddhist literature provides very little evidence of embroidered clothes. It is possible that in the new stage of economy, when urbanism was in the process of emergence, and people were trading in exchange of gold bullion, there was less demand for gold decoration on fabric. But that the skill was present in some form could be known from the *Jatakas*[26] where the stories refer to golden turbans used by kings and golden trappings used for state elephants.[27] *Sona-Nanda Jataka* gives an elaborate description of the use of a heavily embroidered turban in gold in connection with king Manoja's entering the hermitage of Bodhisattva "who in this blaze of glory comes, with turban cloth of gold".[28] Such evidences would clearly indicate that the lavish use of gold and silver threads on turbans was in fashion among the nobility.

Jain literature provides interesting information about the silver or gold work on clothes, the text categorically banned the acceptance of such precious clothes by the monks and nuns, when they were begging for clothes.[29] The sacred text says, 'no monk or nun should accept golden plaids, glittering like gold, embroidered with gold'.[30] This description in *Acharanga Sutra* clearly spells out the evidence of the use of such clothings either by the royal courts or moneyed people. *Kanakakhachiya* was a kind of cloth embroidered with golden thread.[31]

Several references, however, have been found in the accounts of Greek travellers throwing light on the existence of the gold embroidery tradition of the 4th century B.C. onwards. Describing the Indian ways of living as seen by Megasthenes, Strabo writes, "Contrary to their simplicity in general, they like to adorn themselves with apparels embroidered with gold."[32] Strabo on another occasion says, 'the variegated garments spangled with gold' were in fashion.[33] Curtius Rufus Quintus says that a king rides in a golden palanquin, garnished with pearls which dangle all round it and he is robed in fine muslin embroidered with purple and gold.[34] Ptolemy speaks about the manufacture of muslin adorned with small pearls.[35] These references distinctly reflect that gold

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and precious stone embroidery on various fabrics including muslin was much in vogue amongst the nobility. It is difficult to find out a corroboration of the texts with the contemporary life pattern of the Indians. But one may make a good attempt at it, if one tries to analyse the contemporary art pieces which depict men and women wearing draperies and jewellery.

Starting with Bharhut[36] which in the true sense illustrates human figures in all poses and postures for the first time, we find a tradition of textiles which is usually plain without much decorations, except for a narrow decorative band made to hang between the legs attached to the *kamarband*. Unlike the other parts of dress, which are plain and simple, one would notice that this strip was beautifully decorated and perhaps also embroidered (Pl. 1). This is found in Sanchi as well.

There is reason to believe that this piece of cloth attached to drapery later on came to be known as *patka*. Barua observed that *kamarband*, the belt around the waist, was also embroidered.[37] The painting from Ajanta shows three women attendants wearing *kamarband* heavily embroidered[38] in gold colour. One may perhaps speculate that the use of gold and silver thread was in currency during the period.

With the Kushanas, the socio-cultural and economic life of India seems to have taken a new turn. During this period India witnessed two cultural forces, one from central Asia and the other through the coast because of Indo-Roman trade. Indian economy not only reached a stable stage, but a new socio-historical phenomenon called urbanism swept practically the whole of India. The contemporary texts such as *Divyavadana*[39] and *Lalitavistara*[40] refer to a word *hiryani* or *hirivastra* indicating a cloth of gold. For the first time in a historical text we find reference to a cloth embroidered or woven with gold. It is not known whether *hiryani* was changed into *kinkhab* of later time. But on the testimony of *Divyavadana*, we may say that the shawls richly embroidered and brocaded with precious stones and gold became popular during this period. This is inferred from the mention of the term *ratna-swarna-pravaraka*.[41] Here *pravaraka* possibly means a *dupatta*, the head veil and *ratna-swarna* refers to precious stones and gold, hence meaning a *dupatta* adorned with gold and precious stones.

Much like the earlier sculptures, the Mathura sculptures of the Kushana period also show embroideries of various kinds. The seated image of Surya[42] as illustrated by Vogel is shown wearing a short sleeved tight tunic fitting closely to the body and the arms. The tunic, having a semi-circular neck, has embroidered borders made of a scale pattern running down the middle of the chest. The cap which he is found to have worn is also heavily embroidered.

Another figure[43] which by its beard and frizzled hair seems to be Persian or Saka, is shown wearing what appears to be a heavily embroidered tunic. The patterns seem to be embroidered in arched panels with simple beading and rope-like designs on both sides. The hem of the hemispherical cap is embroidered and decorated with the figures of sun and moon on the left. The decorative designs found on these sculptures may be claimed to be in gold and silver thread, as these are very similar to objects found on the grave goods of

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the Scythian burials. But one is also not very sure whether these designs developed later into what we understand as the *zardozi* embroidery of a later period.

The second phase of Ajanta painting, which is contemporary to the Guptas, provides a better picture in this regard. It is interesting to notice that the costumes of the local kings, their guards etc. represented in the Ajanta paintings are very plain and do not show any ostentatious decorations on their garments. But while representing foreigners, the painters are very particular about emphasising designed costumes. In Cave No. XVII, where a number of foreigners, apparently of Iranian descent, are depicted, they are shown wearing dresses heavily embroidered in gold colour, indicating gold thread. On top of the left side of the painting, an Iranian is shown riding on an elephant wearing a tunic with sleeves, the cuffs and the front portion of which are beautifully embroidered. Another fat attendant apparently of foreign origin, with a humorous face wears an embroidered dress with design consisting of bands decorated with solid triangles and circles. The tunic is tied around the waist with folds of a *kamarband*.[44]

The women in Ajanta are also represented wearing embroidered clothes showing profusion of gold colour. In Cave XVII,[45] a woman (otherwise without much clothing) wears an embroidered scarf covering her hair. In Cave II a woman is represented wearing a striped and embroidered cap. The colour and intricate design shown in the painting suggest embroidery done by gold thread. The Champiya Jataka represented in Cave No. I[46] illustrates small stars worked in silk and gold or silver thread on a dull yellowish texture over the cushions and backrests. The black spaces visible underneath indicate the embroidered portion. Plate (b)[47] shows the cushion for an arm rest embroidered with golden stripe in the centre, on the blue base. One may apprehend perhaps that the stuff of the cloth was possibly *tash*, embroidered with gold and silver wire. The patterns shown in the plate are so well marked that one may consider these as specimens of *zardozi* workmanship. There are a number of other paintings in Ajanta, where similar evidence is available (Line-drawing 1). But the texts of the contemporary time are not very explicit about embroideries done in metal thread. An interesting evidence is however noteworthy in *Harshacharita* though late in date, referring to a dazzling muslin robe embroidered with hundreds of diverse flowers and birds gently rippled by the motion of the breeze, *bahuvidha kusuma sakunisata sabhisatta*.[48]

A *DVARAPALA*: LOWER STORY: CAVE VI

Indeed, the descriptions found in *Harshacharita* and *Kadambari*, the popular works of Banabhatta, speaking eloquently about embroidery work in metal, leave no room for doubt that silk clothings of different colours (*indrayudhajalavarnamsuka*) were embroidered with gold and jewels, *muktamsuka*, meaning studded with fine pearls. The expression *tara mukta phalopachiyamanas*[49] referred to the couches whose gay coverlets cast the hamsa tribes into shade as the bodies were overlaid with star-like pearls. Verse 243 of *Harshacharita* however mentions *kararange* meaning leather buckles having charming borders adorned with bright gold leaf work.[50] We are not sure whether this gold work on leather followed the *zardoz* technique, but in view of the myth found

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among the *zardoz* living in Delhi, it is highly probable that gold work on leather might have been in practice during that time. We may however recall in this context that leather objects found in the Scythian burials have designs embroidered in gold. Contemporary designs of leather upper and leather shoes can be seen in Pls. 2-5.

A text called *Kuttanimatam*[51] belonging to a later period gives an important information about the craft. Damodar Gupta, the minister of Jaypida, categorically speaks about this work, when he refers to the shoes worn by Bhattasuta Chintamani, a person of affluent position. His shoes were embroidered with gold thread and decorated with a floral meander (*kusumadana*). His lower garment also shows work done in gold thread (*uchanda-kanaka-garbhita*).[52]

On surveying the contemporary lexicons, Sanskrit and Prakrit texts, we come across the word *khalikachitavastram* as some kind of embroidered clothes.[53] Incidentally during the voyage of Marcopolo through India in the early 13th century, he found that gold working was at an opulent stage both in leather and textile. While describing the robes received by the twelve thousand barons from the emperor on the great festivals of India, he commented that "these robes are garnished with gems and pearls and other precious things in a very rich and costly manner. A fine golden girdle of great richness and value and likewise a pair of boots of *camut*, i.e., of Borgal"[54] — curiously wrought with silver thread.[55]

At another place, while mentioning the prices of the commodities found in the coast of Gujarat, he observed that the Indians living in this part of country decorated cushions with gold embroidery. He writes, "they also work here beautiful mats in red and blue leather, exquisitely inlaid with figures of birds and beasts and skilfully embroidered with gold and silver wire. They also embroidered cushions in gold thread, so fine that they are worth six marks of silver apiece."[56] In the explanatory note, Marcopolo observes that in places like Gujarat, Kathiawar and Rajasthan inlaid gold and stone working on leather for making bed covers and palanquin mats were in great fashion during this time.[57] The accounts are very important, as these tell us how silver embroideries were practised on objects like dress materials, furnishing and other items of use particularly of leather.

The historical references cited above from Vedic times to thirteenth century enumerate several references pointing to ornamentation with gold and silver along with precious stones on a variety of fabrics including wool and leather.

Although repeated mention of gold embroidery in variegated forms occurs at several places in early history, absence of material indicating elaborate production of such embroidery leads us to believe that the craft had marginal existence in relation to the main cultural stream in terms of manufacture or production. However, definite evidences are found for large scale manufacture of *zardozi* textiles after the advent of Sultanate rule in India. It is difficult to accept that *zardozi* work found in this period was really a continuation of the earlier tradition. Instead one would find that the craft reached new heights at this stage. One may remember in this context that the Persian

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vocabulary uses a term *zarkas*[58] during this period, which means *zari* embroidery. The practice of offering a robe of honour embroidered with gold and silver thread to the noble guest was in vogue during the period. Accounts are also available regarding the master craftspersons coming from Persia for teaching skills to local craftspersons in the production centres which were known as *tiraz* factory. It may be mentioned here that such references of manufacture are found during Tughlak dynasty, which seems to be the earliest evidence insofar as India is concerned.

Quluqshandi, a writer of the contemporary times, provides a detailed account of state-owned factories under the rule of the Tughlaks. He writes, "therein, of these who are master craftsmen are...makers of embroidery (*zarakisa*). The Sultan of Delhi has a *tiraz* factory (*dar-al-tiraz*) in which there are four thousand manufacturers of silk making all kinds of textiles for robes of honour (*khilla*), robes (*kasawa*) and presents (*itlakat*)."[59]

Al-Umari while speaking about the dress of the nobles of Delhi during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Tughlak writes, "No Indian but the Sultan and those whom he permits could use saddles with gold embroideries. The rest according to him could use only silver embroideries."[60] Regarding the costumes of the Indians, he wrote, "most of their *tartar* (*tartari*) robes are embroidered with gold (*muzarkasa-bi-dhahab*). Some wear garments with both sleeves having a *tiraz* border of gold embroidery (*zarkas*)."[61] Giving an account of Sultan Muhammad (1320-51 A.D.), Barani writes that "Sultan Muhammad decided to recognise the Abbasid caliphate. He paid allegiance to the representatives of the family, who were in Egypt in the year (1343-44 A.D.) and in return he received a robe of honour (*khilla*)[62] (*dar tiraz-i-djamsha-yi-zarbaft-u-kimati*) meaning that on the *tiraz* inscription of gold embroidered robes of value, they should inscribe the name of Caliph and nothing else."[63] These are said to have been the specific orders given by Muhammad Tughlak.

Making an overview of the accounts left by Quluqshandi, Umari and Barani, there is no doubt that the Sultanate period was the time when there was a preponderance of gold/silver embroidery on dresses and on saddles and other leather works. The precious embroideries were affixed either on the arms or on the shoulders or in front or even at the skirt edges of garments. The use of such decoration by the Muslim aristocrats came into fashion at this time. One interesting custom noticed during this time was embroidering of the writings from holy scriptures with metal thread, indicating perhaps that this work was well absorbed in the mainstream of culture by that time. Gold embroideries in India seem to have reached a new phase in history. This could be known from frequent references to costumes of different kinds embroidered with gold and silver by several workers. But what is important to note in this context is that initially the *tiraz* inscription in the name of Caliph started to be made in *zarkas*.[64] The makers of such embroideries were called *zarkisa*.

The other sources of information of this period are translations of the works of Ibn Batuta, who travelled through India during the Sultanate period (1287-1290). He has given interesting details of gold embroidery. Giving an account of a robe of honour which probably came from the Delhi *tiraz* factory,

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Ibn Batuta writes, "after the *maghrib* prayer they brought to Amir Ghadda a silk robe of blue colour embroidered with gold and studded with precious stones with a cap to match. The precious stones were so many in number that even the colour of the cloth was hidden from view."[65] Describing the same robe R.B. Serjeant opines that it was presented to him by the king of India Muhammad Shah.[66]

Ibn Batuta goes on to say: In the year 743 H (1342 A.D.) the king of China sent to the Sultan of India at Delhi a present containing, among other things, five garments studded with jewels and five gold embroidered quivers (*tarakis muzarkasa*).[67] These beautiful exquisite *zari* works were found not only on the dresses and draperies, but Batuta has left a picturesque description about the majestic pavilion, with five parasols, where Sultan Kaiqubad celebrated Nauroz festival. During the festival time, the white parasol was embedded with gold; the curtains were made of velvet and silk and these were of different colours. The most popular colours were violet, purple and blue. These were all decorated with embroideries in gold. According to the description, the king used to wear a long coat and belt interwoven with high workmanship of gold (Pls. 6 and 7). It seems that when the Sultans after the initial invasions settled down in Delhi, they adapted this embroidery from the Tartar and Khotan.[68] Thus by the time Muhammad Tughlak ascended the throne, *zardozi* became the dress of the court and courtly nobles.

Amir Khusro, the Persian poet who came during the time of Iltutmish, has also left a narration of this. He has given a list of foreign stuffs which seems to have had gold embroidery.[69]

Among these one was *nasiz* translated as a kind of silken stuff with gold embroidery. According to him Sultan Kaiqubad sent an embroidered cloth to Bughra Khan's camp.

During the Sultanate time saddles were elaborately embroidered. Ibn Batuta tells us that these were decorated with gold embroideries. The text narrates that during the Id morning, the elephants were adorned with saddles embroidered with silk and gold threads and these were kept reserved for the Sultan's use only. Each elephant was decorated with a silk parasol studded with jewels and pure gold. On the back of each elephant was placed a seat, which was again studded with most precious jewels. The narration tells us how in front of the royal elephant marched the servants and slaves, each wearing a gold cap and a gold belt, which were studded in some cases with jewels.[70]

Ibn Batuta further describes that during the Id festival, the entire palace was decorated with jewels and gold. A throne was placed for the Sultan, over which there was a parasol studded with jewels.[71] The banners and standards which were used by the footmen in the processions were said to have been embroidered in gold.

The narration also tells us how the number of tents in the city of Cambay were made not only of expensive pieces of cloth, but these were embroidered with gold and bedecked with jewels. A confirmation of this statement is found from the travel accounts of Marcopolo, who himself had seen some of these gold embroideries.

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Ibn Batuta tells us that Khudawandzada Ziya-ud-din, who was appointed as lord of justice (*amir-i-dad*), was offered a robe of silk, embroidered with gold called *surat-i-sher* (i.e. image of lion) by the Sultan. The robe which included the lion motif was done with intricate stitches in gold thread.[72] Ibn Batuta further writes that when he attended the court of Ala-ud-din Tarmashirin of Transoxiana which was situated between China, India, Iraq and Uzbek, he found that the king who was sitting inside the tent was draped in a silk dress decorated with embroidery in gold.[73] This information is very interesting, as it suggests that *zardozi* work was popular as a form of royal dress even as far as this region, which might have been the result of direct or indirect trade contacts between India and Trans-Asia. The travel account of Ibn Batuta clearly reveals that embroidery in gold on both silk and velvet was very popular among the nobility and royalty.

The next literary source which is of immense importance in regard to this craft is the *Futuhat-i-Firozshahi*, the autobiography of Firozshah Tughlak, where for the first time the word *zardozi* appeared.[74] This gives an elaborate description of the dresses of the Sultans which were made with this form of embroidery.

According to this account, the Sultan is said to have worn *kulah* (turban) on his head, which was studded with precious stones. In public meetings the Sultan used to wear *barani* (either of wool or of silk) with its shoulders beautifully embroidered. The textiles which were presented to people from the courts were always embroidered with gold. Delhi being the centre of the Sultanate power became an important centre of *zardozi* work as well. Simultaneously several new centres came up in places like Gujarat, Rajasthan and Bengal. Needless to say, these centres grew up because of the patronage extended by the provincial Sultans and the Hindu kings of the respective regions.

The *Futuhat-i-Firozshahi* gives us elaborate information about this craft. We are told that Firozshah Tughlak classified this exotic embroidery into various types.[75] According to clause 13, the objects prepared for giving as presents by the kings or royal nobles should be the best ones; in other words these should be beautifully embroidered. But at the same time a restriction was imposed on figurative motifs on the robes. Firoz ordered that only those symbols could be used for decoration which were allowed in the Shariyat. In clause 14 Firoz writes prior to this, clothes of the rich people were made of silk, embroidered with gold or *zaridar*. But from this time these have been banned as there was prohibition for such clothes in the Shariyat. Firoz says, "I have been empowered that only such garments should be worn as have been approved by the Prophet as lawful."

Thus all embroidered costumes were banned allowing only small-sized embroidered banners and caps. In clause 51, he reminds his readers once again about the prohibition of the use of embroidered clothes.

Apart from imposing general restrictions on gold embroidery, he restricted designs also. It is clear from his account that a Sultan can easily be distinguished by his dress, which was lavishly embroidered by gold, from

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other persons of noble birth. This is also evident in some of the paintings of the period (Pl. 6).

Thus we see that during Firozshah's time, either for Firoz's own bigotry or for some other reason, the craft faced a setback. With him thus ended the climax of the *zardozi* work of the Sultanate period.

Ziya-ul-din Barani[76] has left an interesting account of the regulations imposed by Ala-ud-din for control of prices of such luxury goods. By regulation V the Sultan controlled the prices of five stuffs i.e. *tasbin, tabrizi, zamaizarbaft wa zarnigar* (embroidered brocades) and *khaz-hia* Delhi (Delhi alike). According to the court instructions, these objects could not be sold at Sarai Adl (main business centre of the city) without the order of the superintendent.

There is thus no doubt that the turning period of zardozi craft may be observed during the time of Firozshah Tughlak, who in his official capacity imposed restrictions and curtailed the production of the craft. This left a deep impact on the gold embroidery craft in general.

We may also recall here Marcopolo's mentioning of a kind of stuff which was among the articles sent from Baghdad to Okkodai Khan. The material is called *dardas* (a stuff embroidered with gold). Motichandra[77] correctly observed that these terms were indications of their origin, which were definitely not of indigenous nature.

Spies in his translation of *Subh-ul-asa*[78] mentions an authority namely Ash-Shauf Nasir-al Din al-Husayuial-Adami, who writes that during the 14th century the nobility used to wear gold embroidered *tartaric* gowns, having embroidered sleeves and an embroidered cloth between the shoulders.

Here we may compare the Sanskrit literature of the 14th and the 15th century, which throws light on the existence of gold and silver embroidery. As narrated in the *Prabandhachintamani,*[79] the king of Kolhapur received sandals inlaid with jewels. Two words *svarnopadan* and *svarnavalaksagumphita* refer to shoes embroidered with gold and inlaid with jewels. These words occur in the *Puratana-prabandha-sangraha.*[80] The *Varnaratnakara*, a 14th century work written by Jyotirisvara Thakura, cites two words: *sonapalika manikanti*. Jyotirisvara has written his work in Maithili and the area he talks about is North Bihar or present-day Mithila. It mentions *Sonasuchika karao ekadevagiria pachitta eka phanda badhane,*[81] implying a gold embroidered dhoti on deogiri stuff. His list of stuffs includes varieties of silks manufactured in the country either indigenously or imported from outside. *Suchisona*[82] as implied by the name indicates that the silk was embroidered with gold. Similarly *kanakpatra*[83] probably refers to gold leaf on silk.

Dr. B.J. Sandesara has compiled a list of textile stuffs (*varnakas*) which refers to traditional stuffs and imported items prevalent in Gujarat during the 14th and the 15th century. The compilation called *varnakasamuchaya*[84] mentions terms like *jarabapha*[85] referring to Persian *zarbaft; karmadana*[86] the sanskritised form of the Persian word *kamdani* the gold embroidered stuff; *pataniya sachopa,*[87] where *sachopa* implies gold embroidery and *pataniya* indicates the centre of manufacture of such stuff, which is Patan, probably in Gujarat. The *Prithvichandracharita*[88] written in 1421 also gives reflections of textiles with

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work in gold and precious stones. *Phudadiya*[89] indicates a rich silk stuff with jewel setting. The Jain miniature paintings of Kalpasutra also show use of gold (Pl. 8).

The *Kanhadade Prabandha* of Padmanabha[90] refers to the word *sonapana*[91] which may be the same as *kanakapatra*.[92] All these imply a rich silk stuff decorated with gold leaf. Such textiles were worn by the merchants of Kalavagudra, Anagundi which were located in present-day Bidar and Telengana. It means that the *zardozi* had already started penetrating the South. *Phaudadi*[93] was some kind of rich stuff in which gold and gems were used. The study of several texts from Gujarat, Bihar and Andhra — Telengana mentioning textile stocks, clearly reveals that in spite of all the restrictions and temporary setbacks imposed by Firozshah Tughlak at the main seat of Sultanate power i.e. Delhi, the *zardozi* with its intricaries was fully imbibed in the Hindu mainstream. The rich and the aristocrats both Hindus and Muslims had been using them as a special form of distinction. The cultural absorption of the *zari* embroidery was so deep that the original Persian names were suitably adopted in the local dialects of Gujarat, Bihar and Andhra. We may mention here that silk handkerchiefs and caps embroidered with gold were reported to be manufactured in Bengal also.[94] But this seems to have been connected with the emergence of the Muslim nobility in Bengal.

During the 16th century, the *zardozi* craft seems to have reached a flourishing stage in Vijayanagar under the Hindu rule of Krishnadev Rai (1509-1530). Robert Sewell mentions the visit of a Portuguese traveller named Christana de Figueiredo to the court of Krishnadev Rai, where he found the king wearing expensive dresses made with gold and jewels.

The king was clothed in certain white clothes embroidered with many roses in gold and to each Portuguese he gave such embroidered cloth designed with many pretty figures as tokens of friendship and love.[95] This account is important, as it throws an interesting light on the design of the gold embroidery work, which was in practice in Vijayanagar during the 16th century. This seems to have been also a popular commodity of export craftwork in Europe. The influence of gold embroidery in the Vijayanagar empire continued during the time of Achyuta Rai (1530-1542). Fernao Nunex, another Portuguese traveller, mentions that king Achyuta Rai's clothes were all made of precious silk stuff worked with gold.[96]

The above two narrations indicate very clearly that gold embroidery was very much a part of the court culture in the Deccan during the 16th century and the Portuguese naturally became attracted to this prestigious craft. It was probably at this stage that the Portuguese influence started making an impression on the craft.[97]

A new revival is noticed in this craft during the Mughal period. The court costumes of the Mughal emperors were all made in zardozi work. Consequently, there grew up important centres of this craft, as the centre of court *karkhana* shifted with the change in capital by different Mughal emperors. Akbar's court was at Agra, which was shifted to Delhi by Shahjahan, the epicentres of the Mughal culture. But court-run workshops were organised in

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several other places to cater to the requirement of the court, small or big. The craftsmen grew in number and came over to these places from all parts of the country. But their centre of attraction was the Mughal court where they could take advantage of the court-run workshops and could sell their objects at high prices. In a separate section we have dealt with in detail how these *karkhanas* provided economic stability to the artisans by offering theoretical and practical knowledge to the craftspersons on the one hand, and negotiating market facilities on the other. The Mughal paintings from the time of Akbar provided an illuminating picture of *zardozi* work prevalent during this time. Not only were the royalty and nobility represented richly attired in gold and jewels; the horses, camels, the elephants are all depicted with richly embroidered saddles. Thus while appearing in public a king not only tied pearl-strings around his neck but used to wear dresses like *achkan* embroidered with pearls. Such gold embroidered pieces became popular with the Mughal kings as gift items as well. The gifting of such items to the non-Muslim nobles, rulers etc. extended this craft to the non-Muslim courts, particularly in Rajasthan and Gujarat, where the opulent traditions already existed. Slowly the Hindu elite also started using gold embroidered dresses as a form of aristocracy in contemporary India.

The *Ain-i-Akbari*[98] gives a rich account of *zardozi* work in various items, particularly the shawls. The text elaborately speaks about the production of the embroideries under the *karkhana* system. It further refers to people generally wearing *tus* shawls without altering its natural colour. His majesty had them dyed. The emperor paid much attention to craftsmanship and the genuineness of the materials. He took care that pure gold and silver was used. All embedded textured fabrics used to give the finished product a subtle aura.[99]

Besides garments, the Mughals adopted this craft in various other items. One of the most important objects which seems to have been decorated with *zardozi* work was the tent materials. In describing the camp furnishing of the tents Abul Fazl commented about various types of tent structures viz. *chubin, rawati, do-ashiyana manzil, zarhindoz, ajaibi, mandal shamiyana,* all having inner linings of velvet brocade.[100] It is to be noted that he did not specifically mention gold embroidery, but he referred to *zardozi* tent in some places in connection with the servants. It is thus clear that the temporary structures for the emperors also had works in gold embroidery on the inner side. Looking at the rich assemblage of *zardozi* material, and on the basis of the information giving Akbar's patronage, there is no doubt that the *zardozi* craft reached its highest peak during this time.

Monserrate also corroborates this view. It is said that the emperor used to wear garments of silk, beautifully embroidered in gold with pearls and gold jewellery.[101] The list of the official records presenting the state of things at the death of Akbar was included in De Laet[102] and Manrique's[103] *Itinerario Itenertents.* These were published in 1531 and 1640. Abdul Aziz[104] reproducing these facts states that there were 5,000,000 items with gold and silver decorations, which included tents, *kanats* etc. decorated with gold and silver; covering clothes for horses and elephants, cloak of every kind etc. Also various kinds of coats and

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equestrian ornaments, worked and embroidered with gold, silver and precious stones, including the arms borne and insignia carried before the imperial persons and those of the royal house.[105]

The *zardozi* embroidery which was firmly established by then in the large production system, continued to maintain its excellence during the regime of Jahangir. His memoir *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* mentions at several places such expensive, gorgeous robes of honour.[106] At one place he mentions, "on Tuesday, the 17 zi-gada, he (Shahjahan, his son) was free to go, I presented him with a special gold embroidered robe of honour. Describing the Nauroz festival, Jahangir has mentioned a tent erected at *divan-i-am* having canopies of the richest and most finely embroidered velvet, silk and cloth of gold. These were inlaid with pearls, jewels and diamonds."[107]

The glory of *zardozi* as a craft in Mughal period was noticed by Tavernier in his *Indian Travels*. He says that "The great Mughal has seven thrones, some set all over with diamonds, others with rubies, emeralds and pearls. But the longest throne is erected in the hall of first court of palace. The underpart of the canopy is embedded with pearls entirely, fringe of pearls round the edge, upon the top of the canopy which is made like an arch with four panes, stands a peacock with its tail spread consisting entirely of sapphires and other precious coloured stones. At the distance of 4 feet upon each side of throne are placed two umbrellas, the handles of which are about 5 feet high covered with the diamonds, the umbrellas themselves, being of crimson velvet, embroidered and fringed with pearls. This is the famous throne which Timur began and Shahjahan finished and is really reported to have costed a hundred and sixty millions and five hundred thousand and time of our money."[108]

The author of the *Khulasat-ut-tawarikh* while giving an account of craft and industries of different provinces writes, "Agra was famous for its gold and silver embroidery on turbans and Gujarat for stuffs of gold embroidered velvet."[109]

Shahjahan's period may be called the golden period in regard to sophistication of this craft. With the shifting of his political seat from Agra to Delhi, the court-based *karkhanas* spread up in and around Delhi; the *karkhanas* then worked in full swing, and the craftsmen got patronage from all sections of rich people. As the seat of Mughal rule was shifted to Delhi, a large number of craftsmen moved to Delhi from Agra as well as other parts of the country (Pl. 9).

But the period of Aurangzeb shows a turning point in *zardozi* work. Due to incessant warfare, royal resources became scarce. Besides, Aurangzeb was in favour of austere living. The court no longer patronized this art and as a result many craftsmen left the Mughal metropolis and took shelter around provincial courts. Many craftsmen were then recruited by the Rajput *rajas*, who by this time had not only become conversant with Mughal luxuries, but in their respective ways had become quite powerful independently. Quite naturally they wished to emulate Mughal sophistication in their own courts. In the south, at Srirangapatam and Hyderabad the *zardozi* craft got a fresh swing under Tipu Sultan's and the Nizam's rule respectively. The comparative study of the items

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manufactured in these places reveals that *zardozi* craft of these places was influenced by the contemporary Mughal tradition. In spite of the overwhelming influence of the Mughal style, the period saw the emergence of several regional centres with their distinctive quality. The craftsmen who dispersed to the provincial courts, got a new boost by the introduction of *riyasati karkhanas* which replaced the earlier court *karkhanas*.[110] The system of *karkhanas* which was introduced during the Mughal period was a vital economic system and after a lapse of time this became rejuvenated in the provincial courts under the *riyasati karkhana* system. The *zardozi* craftsmen working at Delhi and Agra at this stage shifted to the provincial centres. Thus, while the traditional *karkhana* system was losing its roots in Delhi, it was gaining in strength in the provincial areas.

This new socio-economic and political factor provided some impetus for the continuation of this craft. The artisan group during this time got some opportunities from the newly created urban elite class, who by that time inherited some of the tastes and preferences of their rulers. Though the work was not on an opulent scale, there was more or less a steady market, as there was an increase in demand for smaller work. Most of the objects were small domestic articles but the court tradition was not lost totally.

Meanwhile the discovery of the Cape route at the end of the 15th century provided a major change in the structure of Euro-Asian trade. The Portuguese participated in intra-Asian trade. They naturally became interested in this luxurious product for export to European markets.

It is, therefore, clear that before the East India Company, Europe had become a market for the *zardozi* craft. Lotika Vardarajan has rightly observed that "there was an opulent tradition of couch work based on the usage of metallic thread, and interspersed on occasions with precious stones."[111] The Portuguese were great patrons of this craft, and as a result, the European market to which the Portuguese were attached was flooded with this prestigious handicraft.

The popularity of *zardozi* craft in Europe in the 16th century gave a boost to the craft, when the East India Company set its foot on the Indian soil. Also this opened channels for marketing of the *zardozi* craft in later periods.

Having survived the vicissitudes of time and fortune, Delhi in the latter half of the 19th century came to acquire again a new look under the British rule. The new political power provided a fresh impetus for the revival of the city culture. On January 1, 1877, Delhi celebrated the great occasion of the assumption of the title *Kaisar-i-Hind* or Empress of India by Queen Victoria. The activities were arranged in grand Mughal fashion. Durbar was once again organised, first by Lord Lytton and then 26 years later on January 1, 1903 by the Viceroy Lord Curzon to coincide with the proclamation ceremony of Edward VII as the King Emperor. This durbar was planned on the model of the King Durbar of 1877 but it was on a vastly larger and more gorgeous scale. Lord Curzon took great pains to plan the whole show himself. During this time, the special durbar issue, *India Durbar*, London[112] reported of this unique situation. The main streets of Shahjahanabad again witnessed an imposing spectacle of splendid processions in the finest tradition of Mughal rule. The third *durbar*

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was held on 12th December, 1911 in the presence of Emperor George V, who on that occasion announced the transfer of the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi. The insignia worn by the emperor is exhibited at Pl. 10. This was borne out by the tremendous increase in the population of Delhi. Ghurye[113] observes, "Delhi's great growth began after it became capital of the country registering an increase of population of 30.7% in 1921."

With the gradual inception of British rule, the *zardozi* craft underwent changes at two levels. Firstly, as there was no longer royal patronage, both the *karkhana* and *riyasati karkhana* systems completely crumbled down. Secondly, the craftspersons felt the need of finding a market to sell the finished products. The expensive nature of the craft restricted its use. But fortunately a new group of patrons emerged as there was a substantial section of the administration, rich traders among the European population who seemed to have shown their appreciation for the skills of the *zardozi* craftspersons. New types of articles were manufactured to cater to the needs of this new group of elite. This was the time when the craftspersons started doing new items like uniforms, table covers, etc. Naturally a remarkable change in the sizes and hence in the forms of the objects could be noticed at this time. We propose to take up this aspect in detail in the chapter on design and forms. But one important socio-economic phenomenon arose during this time. Formerly this work had been restricted to Muslim artisans, but now with the change in fashions and requirements the skill was found to have penetrated into the cultural stream of the Hindu society as well.

The brief historical background indicates that this noble craft adapted itself suitably to every political change. The craft spread to the European market and later sought American, Middle East and Japanese outlets. Overseas patronisation provided a backbone to the crumbling market outlets for the craft. These economic networks had direct influence on the design, form, social and production pattern. The material about its history is indeed most inadequate. We are not yet sure about the origins of the craft, but there is enough evidence to indicate that the craft was in existence in the pre-Islamic period. During the Sultanate and Mughal periods due to the patronage extended by the rulers, the craft seems to have established firm roots in India. But the fall of the Mughal empire resulted in complete dislocation of the craft tradition, forcing it to shift its activities from Delhi and Agra to several provincial courts. During this period new centres like Hyderabad, Jaipur, Patiala, Rampur, Bhopal and Banaras emerged as active centres of this craft. The next stage of development was the result of patronage offered by the Portuguese and other European traders. Lately, it is being patronised by several eastern countries, America, Japan and European nations.

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Footnotes

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1. a. Paul, 1989, p. 309, p. 271;
   b. *Zardoz* — an embroiderer, Fazl-i-Ali, 1979, p. 295;
   c. *Zardozi* — embroidery, embroi dered, ibid., p. 296.
2. *Yadakarana dhurashu prash-atirayug-dham hiranyayan pratya-tkan amumdhvam, vishran it spradho Maruto vyasyathm shubhe yatamanuratha avratsata.* Rig Veda, V.55.6, Max Müller, Vol. 2, 1890, p. 348. Here the word '*Hiranyayan atkan*' has appeared. Griffith writes, "When to your car-poles ye have yoked your spotted deer to be your steeds and put your golden mantle on O, Marut ye disperse..." Griffith, 1973, p. 268.
3. Ibid.
4. *Arusho jat-pada ikaya purohito rajan yakshika devan,* Rig Veda, X 1.6, Max Müller, Vol. II, p. 261; Griffith, 1973, p. 530.
5. Op. cit., Max Müller, Vol. I, p. 348.
6. *Vibhadradrapi hiranyan varuno vast niraijam. Pari spasho nisedire.* Rig Veda, 1.25, 13, Max Müller, Vol. I, 1890, p. 17. "Varuna wearing golden nail hath clad him in a shining robe", Griffith, 1973, p. 15.
7. *Sreshtham peso adhidhayi darsh-atam stomo vaja rabhavastam jujustan,* Rig Veda, IV, 36.7, Max Müller, Vol. II, 1890, p. 294; Griffith, 1973, p. 225.
8. *Patniv purvhutim vavradhaihya ushasankta purudha vidane starirn-atkan vyutum vashana suryasya griya suddas, 1, hiranyai,* R.V., I, 122, 2, 2, Max Müller, Vol. I, 1890, p. 1108; Griffith, 1973, p. 83.
9. Ibid.
10. *Tasmid prashuptmitishesah maharajatham swarnatantu nirmita vaso dharinm,* Valmiki Ramayana, 5/10/7, Mukhopadhyaya, B.S., 1983, p. 1761.
11. Roy, P.C., Vol. I.
12. Shri Mahabharata, Vol. I.
13. *Mahahrvastrambara,* ibid., Vol. I, 198/9, p. 570.
14. Roy, P.C., Vol. II, pp. 114-115.
15. *Aurnana bailan varanadashan jatarupa-pariskrtan pravarajina mukhyansca kamboja pradadau bahumn*: Shri Mahabharata, 51/3, p. 859.
16. *Maniratnani bhasavanti kancanan sukshmavastrakm,* Sabhaparva, ibid., 52/34, p. 865.
17. *Samvrata manichiraistu shyamasta-mranta lochana,* Sabhaparva, ibid., 52/34, p. 866.
18. Mukhopadhyaya, B.S., 1983.
19. Ibid., 5/10/7, p. 1761.
20. Ibid., 5/15/45, 1983, p. 1795.
21. Ibid., 2/12/98, 1983, p. 493.
22. Ibid., 4/49/4, 1983, p. 1950.
23. Vyas, S.N., 1958, pp. 50-52.
24. Op. cit., 5/49/4, 1983, p. 1950.
25. Vasu, S.C. mentions *Kauseym Vastram,* Vol. I, 1962, p. 764.
26. Cowell, E.B., Vols. I to VI, 1973.
27. Ibid., Jatakas, 1973, Vol. IV, 404, p. 252.
28. Ibid., Jatakas, 1973, Vol. V, 332, p. 170.
29. Jacobi, H., 1964.
30. Ibid., Part I, 1964, p. 158.
31. Ibid., Nisitha Sutram, 1964, Vol. II, s. 12, p. 400, Jain, D.C., 1980, p. 48.
32. Majumdar, R.C., Geography of Strabo, Vol. I, 54, 1981, p. 270.
33. Ibid., XV 1.69, 1981, p. 281.
34. Ibid., Curtius Rufus, Eighth Book, Chapter IX, 1981, p. 105.
35. McCrindle, Ancient India as described by Ptolemy, 1973, p. 60.
36. Barua, P.L., Pl. LVIII, Fig. 63.
37. Ibid., Pl. LXIV, Fig. 74.
38. Fergusson, Pl. LXXXVI, 1971, p. 206.
39. Divyavadana, 1886, p. 316.
40. Lalitavistara, 1877, p. 158.
41. Op. cit., p. 316.
42. Vogel, Pl. XXXIII B.
43. Agrawala, V.S., Pl. XXI.
44. Herringham, Pl. XXXVI.
45. Ibid., Pl. XXXV.
46. Yazdani, Pl. XXXIV(a).
47. Ibid., Pl. XXXIV(b).
48. Cowell, E.B. and Thomas, 1897.
49. Ibid., p. 2421.
50. Kane, P.V., 1917, p. 14.
51. Tansukhram, 1923, pp. 62-66.
52. Pandeya, 1872, p. 42.
53. Motichandra, 1973, p. 114.
54. Borgal is the term for Russian leather, Yule, Vol. I, 1903, p. 396.
55. Ibid., 1903, p. 394.
56. Ibid., Vol. II, 1903, p. 394.
57. Ibid., Vol. II, 1903, p. 396.
58. Serjeant, R.B., 1946, 1.137: *Zarkas* de-

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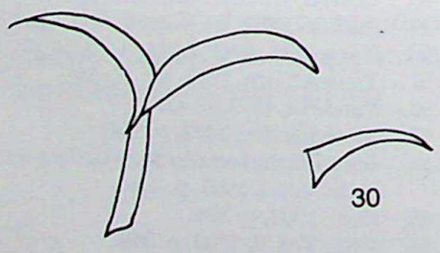
fined as brocade, gold and silver embroidery, Wehr Hans, 1979, p. 437.
59. Quluqshandi, Subh al Asha, 1913, V. 83 and 84.
60. Al-Umari, Masalik al Absar, XIII, 1838, p. 183.
61. Ibid., 1838, p. 215.
62. Serjeant, R.B., 1946, p. 136.
63. Barani, Z., 1888-91, p. 493.
64. *Zarkash* — Gold and Silver Embroidery, Wehr H., 1974, p. 437. Here another word *muzarkas* is defined as embroidered with silver and gold thread.
65. Batuta, 1956, p. 79.
66. Serjeant, R.B., 1946, p. 136.
67. Ibid., p. 137.
68. Op. cit., p. 58.
69. Mirza, M.W. (ed.), 1948, p. 373.
70. Batuta, 1956, p. 60.
71. Ibid., 1956, p. 62.
72. Ibid., 1956, p. 129.
73. Ibid., 1956, p. 254.
74. Futuhat-i-Firozshahi, 1957.
75. Ibid., 1957, p. 21.
76. Barani, Ziyauddin, 1962, p. 312.
77. Motichandra, 1976, p. 146.
78. Spies, O., 1935, pp. 69-70.
79. *Ratnakha-chitapadu-Kayugalam*, Merutunga, 1932, p. 119.
80. Jinavijaya (ed.), 1936, p.39.
81. *Sonasuchika karao eka devagiria pachita eka phanda badhane*, Chatterji, S.K. and Mishra, B., 1942, p. 11.
82. Ibid., 1942, pp. 21-22.
83. Ibid., 1942, pp. 21-22.
84. Sandesara, B.J. (ed.), 1956.
85. Ibid., 1956, p. 181.5.
86. Ibid., 1956, p. 180.
87. Ibid., 1956, p. 35.1.
88. Prithvichandracharita, 1920.
89. Ibid., 1920, p. 102.
90. Vyas, K.B., 1955.
91. Ibid., p. 243.
92. Cf. footnote 83.
93. *Kanaka sakomala phudadi e-vichi ratana baitha*, op. cit., p. 240.
94. JRAS, 1895, pp. 531-32.
95. Sewell, R., 1962, pp. 243-244.
96. Ibid., 1962, p. 363.
97. Lotika Vardarajan has commented elaborately while discussing Indo-Portuguese Textiles, *Marg*, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, p. 90.
98. Ain-i-Akbari, pp. 93-94.
99. Ibid., p. 70.
100. Ibid., pp. 56-57.
101. Monserrate, S.J., 1922, p. 198.
102. De Laet, J., 1928.
103. Manrique's Itinerario, 1640.
104. Aziz, A., 1942.
105. Ibid., Manrique-II, 293-94; Smith, V.A., *JRAS*, 1915, V. 241-42.
106. Jehangir, 1968, pp. 13, 15, 16, 78.
107. Ibid., p. 161.
108. Tavernier, 1773, p. 331.
109. Zahiruddin, F., pp. 494-495.
110. See the chapter on karkhana.
111. Lotika Vardarajan, *Marg*, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, pp. 90-91.
112. India Durbar, 1902, p. 3.
113. Ghurye, 1969, p. 79.



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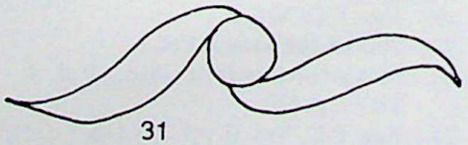

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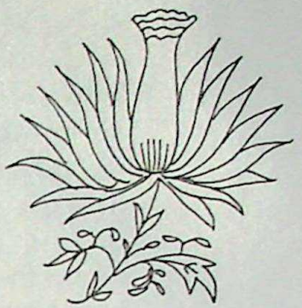

DESIGN AND MOTIFS: FORMS ON FABRIC

Design—the vast multiplicity of expression beyond being a mere decorative assemblage—has the magical potencies of exploration. It absorbs the entire gamut of social surroundings. Historical perspective in the preceding chapter has undoubtedly established that *zardozi* craft was patronized by the Muslim emperors from the Sultanate period onwards. During the course of historical vicissitudes and broader cultural assimilation, other religions viz. Hindu and Jain also influenced its design expanse. The craft therefore reflected the tastes and preferences, fashions and requirements of the elite pockets of various religious sects. Since the design examples were based on the typical taste of the groups of patrons, there were variations in forms and styles.

An attempt has been made in this section to trace the designs executed on various forms in this craft style from the Sultanate period onwards. Functional usage of a particular artefact, the vision vocabulary of the designer and the user also led to important contributions in the development of the artistic designs in *zardozi* craft. The objects replenished with *zardozi* work have been categorized in three groups:

i) Furnishing items and accessories,
ii) Costumes and related accessories, and
iii) Miscellaneous artefacts.

Each group of forms has been discussed in chronological sequence pointing the changes in the designs and styles. There are two broad techniques of *zardozi* work. These are *karchobi* and *kamdani*. Of these *karchobi* style, said to have been developed under the Portuguese influence, was suitable for furnishing artefacts and accessories. The broad category of these items included tent hangings, *kanats*, covers, spreads, trappings, umbrellas, parasols, etc. The fabric was generally velvet or heavy satin with lining support underneath. The *kamdani* technique was on the other hand more opulently practised on finer fabrics such as muslin, silk, etc., which were more suitable for costumes and related accessories such as caps, shoes, belts, purses, fans, jewellery, etc. The division of techniques was not clear-cut and quite often one technique could flow into the other. Apart from these several decorative items different religious manifestations also had *zardozi* work.

Coming to the designs, I have adopted bifocal approach. Selected illustrative examples for each category have been presented along with a number of line-drawings with their vernacular names. These drawings were collected from the craftspersons in old Delhi, who opine that although it is true that only design can be decorated with the metal thread but still a sequence of designs

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with specific terminology continues to be maintained since the earlier times in the form of tracing. These designs have been influenced from time to time by the main cultural streams and have a variety of floral motifs, geometric patterns, animal and bird motifs. The designs are border designs, central designs (*thali-numa*), geometrical patterns (*jalinuma*), filler designs (*bharat*), motifs (*buti, buta*). Few of the important designs collected from the field have been illustrated with suitable nomenclature, along the text.

Furnishing Items and Accessories

Tent hangings, *kanats*, covers, spreads, trappings, umbrellas, parasols, etc. form an important part of the furnishing itineraries. The cultural scene which was oriented to the floor required a variety of carpets, pillows of assorted types and sizes as home furnishings and court furnishings. The large bolsters generally known as *masnads* were used for back support. As my discussions have basically developed from the literary and illustrative sources, time and again I have referred to the illustrations in the miniature paintings as the source of reference. Very few examples of pre-Mughal work have come down to us. The illustrative examples have been taken from various museums and private collections. During the Sultanate period, the enclosures or tents were called *seracheh*. These were made with separate pieces of fabric, suitably embroidered with gold. *Sivan* is the pandal proportionate to the court furnishings. Ibn Batuta[1] is full of such accounts. *Sayabans*, the ceiling covers of gold embroidery, are referred to in Ain-i-Akbari.[2] The beautiful wall-hangings decorating the walls also recall at once the typical courtly Mughal form of style.[3]

Hangings and Kanats

The earliest examples of gold work represented in furnishings are seen in the folios from Kalpasutra dating back to c. 1475-1500 A.D. (Pl. 8). Calico Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum, London have in their collections a number of tent-covers or hangings which have been published elsewhere.[4] An interesting hanging (Pl. 11) illustrates a group of human figures in a garden scenario. A noble woman is shown holding a branch of the tree. A lady musician is playing on *veena* near her with another lady accompanying her on *tanpura*. Two other lady attendants are shown standing on sides. The noble woman by her features and costume appears to be a Mughal lady. She is followed by a female attendant holding a tray. A variety of Indian birds are chirping on the tree. Two bucks with their young ones are seen in the foreground. Everybody is enchanted by the musical notes, which is clearly depicted by the postures of gazelles and deer in the scenery. The conventional flowering tree is covered by a semi-circular arch. The outer border is filled with continuous floral stems interspersed with birds. Thematically this embroidered panel is more in the fashion of a miniature painting. The design shows metal wire couched in basket pattern on the background. The figures are embroidered with silk thread in satin stitch. A two-dimensional effect has been

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given to the human figures, as is usually found in miniature paintings. But in rendering the stags, the vision and execution of the roundity is presented in almost a sculpturesque manner. The movement of the stags contributes to the dynamism of otherwise static composition. The intrusion of the Iranian element is clearly visible, in the manner of using the semi-circular arch, at times encircled by creeper blossoms. There is no doubt that the *zardozi* work through the compositional scheme is reminiscent of Mughal court painting.

It is known that *zardozi* embroidery became popular in Gujarat during the late Mughal period with arrival of Dara Shikoh and his court. A new class of patrons grew up during this time, who by their profession were traders and Jains in their religious affiliation. Plate 12 illustrates a wall-hanging embroidered with silver gilt thread on velvet.[5] By and large, the designs and motifs and even the workmanship of embroidery referred to above are courtly in character. The hangings behind the Jain abbot were in reality the enlargement of the *puthias* which were meant to be hung for religious purposes. Interestingly, here too one finds an illustration of a throne in the centre, over which is placed a decorated canopy. It may be mentioned here that the cushion on the throne exhibits lavish decoration in couching technique, a tradition which was very popular during the Mughal period. Two creepers with leaves, buds and flowers are found placed on opposite sides of the throne (Pl. 13).

The highly stylized art found in this embroidery is a characteristic hieratic type of the Jain miniature. This is shown in the facial and physiognomical features in the dresses and headgears of the two *chauri*-bearers standing opposite to each other across the throne and in high boots. Indeed the type seems to have been imitated from such paintings which were presumably available in the Jain manuscript painting and in the courts of Muslim nobles. This may be compared with the Jain miniature paintings of the Kalpasutra (Pl. 8). It is also well-recognized that the trees and plants which are represented in these paintings are more symbolical than elements of natural life. It is noteworthy about the embroidery on these hangings that the general direction of the decorative devices is on the vertical plane rather than a horizontal spread.

A *kanat* on red velvet again rendering a vertical design shows star patterns encircled in medallions. Two roaring lions are seen holding hoisted flag each with the front paws above a lotus motif encircled in a *pan*-shaped device. This composite design is the insignia of the princely court to which the *kanat* belongs. This *kanat* is from Rajasthan, probably late 19th century (Pl. 14). The style of execution is mainly *karchobi*.

Carpets and Covers

The next group of furnishings discussed are the carpets or floor spreads, ceiling covers, bed covers, etc. All these items have more emphasis on spread-out patterns. The span of designs varies from all over spread to concentration in centre and four corners.

Carpet was more or less a generic name for a variety of floor spreads. In the Mughal court each covering had a distinctive term based on its individual usage or function. *Zaminposh*, the cover for the floor; *takhtposh*, the cover for the

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takht or raised rectangular, square or circular wooden platform with supporting legs; *palangposh*, the bed spread; *dastarkhan*, the spread used for dining purposes; *janamaz*, the prayer mat; *khanposh*, the cover for food trays; *saazposh*, the spread for the musical instruments and so on. The design orientation in each variety was specifically related to its usage. *Janamaz*, the prayer mat, would depict a *mehrab*, an arch with pillars signifying the mosque or a rectangular niche in a wall with the tree of life. Inscriptions from the Kuran were often embroidered. The central area in all coverings was deliberately left plain to suit the purpose of sitting while offering prayers. *Dastarkhan* would again be devoid of any embroidery in the areas meant for sitting and keeping food. *Saazposh* often in the form of the particular instrument had embroidery only along the borders. Similarly *zaminposh* which is used for general or occasional purpose of sitting would have embroidery restricted to the borders.

Covers like the *takhtposh* and *khanposh*, however, infrequently used the entire surface of the fabric for decoration. Patterns with gold and silver composed the motif defining and giving the textured surface a uniform tone. Such covers gave the embroiderer ample opportunity to demonstrate his skills. Such orientation of the spread of design in accordance with its usage is typical of *zardozi* artefacts.

The folios of the miniature painting in Persian style describing the story of Sheikh Sanah and Christian maiden dated circa 1595 A.D. show resplendent use of gold decorations in hangings and carpets (Pl. 7). Similarly, a painting describing darbar of Shah Alam at the end of 18th century depicts usage of furnishings with decorations in *zardozi* style (Pl. 9). Bernier in his travel accounts has mentioned fine coverings with delicate silk embroidery interspersed with gold and silver.[6] The folios from Ragini Kangra circa 1785-90 A.D. show geometrical pattern in gold on the rolled curtain, whereas the borders of the carpet show gold embroidery, the all over spread design of creepers in the centre may be in silver wire and silk thread (Pl. 15). The actual specimens studied include a *takhtposh*, which is presently in the Indian Section at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London bearing Acc. No. 0762. The base fabric of this *takhtposh* is red and green velvet and white satin. The picturesque embroidery here is comparable to any painted narrative. The name of the *zardoz* as evident from the signage was Sherendazka, a Muslim embroiderer.

This splendid *takhtposh* has an outer border of repetitive floral motifs depicting alternately *ath dane ki nargis* and *khairu ke dane ka chaugula*. *Nargis* and *khairu* are two Indian flowers often repeated in metal embroidery. The space between the floral motifs is filled by *chakle wali jali* and *sitare ki bharat*. Sequins are liberally used to bring lustre to the design. The impenetrable undersurface is visible. The border is edged with a gold and silver braid, ending in tassels (Pl. 16).

The body of this *takhtposh* is divided into three panels. The undersurface is mainly red velvet. The two panels on either side have an octagonal wheel with eight spokes as the central motif. Half replicas of the wheel are repeated at the corners. The wheels are embroidered with gold and silver *kalabatoon* in *ari bharat*. The spaces between the spokes depict foliage. Repetitive motifs of

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pairs of peacocks, four pairs in all, each holding a beaded necklace in its beak, are excellent examples of the *meenakari* effect in embroidery (Pl. 23). The body of each peacock is embellished with alternate rows of blue silk and silver thread. The creeping foliage surrounding the peacocks renders traditionally prevalent motifs of *zardozi* embroidery, for example, *karan ka phul, karan ki kali* and the *patti* design.

The central panel (Pl. 17) is the main scene of the narration. The portion is divided into two sections by a canal or river. Over the water, linking the two banks, is a bridge embroidered in gold and silver wire. The canal is highlighted by appliquing a white stripe in the satin fabric, thus matching the colour and ripple of flowing water. This water intersection seems to be an important channel linking the two banks for trade and communication. Navigational activity is illustrated by varieties of small boats, nine in number, floating in the canal. These are *palinav,* decorated boats, *mayur pankhi* (a boat with a peacock head) and a steamer. Apart from these, four fish and a large number of floating ducks represent marine life. The surface of the land, marked by the red velvet background, illustrates the city and the forest on the same plain, without confusing periphery demarcations. A city in the vicinity of the forest is marked by several buildings in Hindu and Muslim architectural styles. Most of the fortifications run along the outer border away from the water source except for one structure, which is centrally placed close to the river. This is perhaps a Hindu temple. A large tree with a thick growth on one side suggests a forest in the background. Stylistically the citadel is more prominent but it is devoid of any rhythm or movement indicating the presence of life (Pl. 18). The area portraying the forest is adorned with creeping foliage with repetitive motifs of *karan ka phul, lot ka phul* and *patti*. Life here is represented by a tiger hunting a deer on one side (Pl. 19). Details of the animals' bodies have been traced in the *ent ki jali* and *nakhuni jali* motifs. The blood-stained mouth of the tiger is represented by stitches in red silk, while the eyes, nose, ears and tail have a black silk filling. A leaping deer in the farthest corner suggests a large forest area. A palm tree has been embroidered against the backdrop of the building on this side. On the other side of the river, forest life is represented by a deer hunt.

A hunter, holding a large bow, is seen sitting on a galloping horse on the other side of the temple-like structure (Pl. 20). Apparently, the hunter is chasing the two deer who are running for their life (Pl. 21). The outlines of all the figurative and architectural forms as well as the leaves, branches and stem of the tree and other floral motifs are indicated by silver wire of the *kora* variety. The wire is laid according to the conventional method of *zari* embroidery whereby it is attached to the surface of the fabric with the help of silk and cotton thread. The body of the horse has an embossed pattern which appears to be *khardar bharat*. The hoofs, eyes, ears, tail are all filled with black silk thread. The finer details on the body of the horse, like the hair on the neck, saddle and rein are again depicted with *kora* wire. The embroidery here is important in the context that each anatomical and subject detail has been exemplified by using varieties of gold and silver wire, *kalabatoon* and silk thread in variegated

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thickness. This elevates the rhythm and movement of the figurative forms as well as the structural specifications of the architecture. The door, windows, dome, flag and so on are all individually and specifically highlighted. Another interesting representation is of a two-wheeled locomotive placed amidst the floral foliage near the river bank (Pl. 22). The depiction of this mode of road transport highlights as to how industrialisation has influenced the embroiderer. The locomotive, which appears to be more like a cycle, has a short front wheel and a large back wheel.

The central panel is more like a painted canvas where life, in water and on land, has been manifested. The delicacy of each motif, which is rather difficult to achieve in non-pliable metallic wire, is clearly visible.

The *takhtposh* distinctly reveals that gold embroidery styles had strong links with the tradition of floor coverings commonly called carpet in the courts of upper India.

A *takhtposh* from Bharany's collection in Delhi in red velvet shows repetitive floral motifs, dense in the border and much apart in the centre (Pls. 24, 25).

Another *zaminposh* from the Victoria and Albert Museum collection in red velvet has resplendent embroidery, gold and silver gilt wire, spangles and sequins only on the borders with repetitive flower and geometric patterns. Four *turanj* i.e. corner motifs inside the border are in *kairi* shape (Pls. 26, 27).

These can be compared with the private collections of Bharany in India, where the border and the body are in two colours i.e. green and red velvet. The joint of the two fabrics has been skilfully hidden with continuous couching stitch in metal wire. Here the base colour of the fabric, particularly in the border, forms part of the repetitive *patti wali buti* design. The outer border has continuous *teele wali jali* along with *guldaudi* floral motif. Here the undersurface is totally invisible. The *turanj* depicts *champa, ded khar ki patti buta* (Pls. 28, 29).

Another *zaminposh* (Pls. 30, 31) also has similar execution of design. In both these coverings couching technique has been employed. However, this double colour scheme is not seen in another cover from the same collection (Pl. 32).

Khanposh, the cover for food, depicted in Pls. 33-34, has very elaborate embroidery on the four borders, which is extending to almost half the width of the total fabric. This again reflects the decoration of the parts more visible to the eyes. The cover when put on the large food tray hangs down, when the bearer carries the tray. The cover is rectangular but the central part is squarish. Black and red velvet form the border and the centre. The border has splendid *bharat* work with only deliberate spaces of the outlines of the *buta* and *patti* motifs. Silver wire has also been used to depict *champa ki buti*. Thus the whole design is composed in gold, interspersed with silver and black hues. The central part has a running border in gold gilt wire with *turanj* in *kairi* motif. Such massive embroideries were done on long rectangular strips which were joined later. The style is *karchobi*. The finer embroidery is however rendered on bed spreads (Pls. 35, 36).

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A *saazposh* (Pl. 36) is the spread for keeping the string instruments like *sitar*. The shape of the spread eloquently speaks of the purpose for which it is used. The blue velvet is the circular form to which a tapering rectangular fabric is joined. The silver and gold wire embroidery in repetitive *guldaudi buti* adorns the continuous border of the spread. The centre of each *buti* has red silk embroidery, border designs are used to fill the inter-spaces. Two *buta* designs again in floral pattern adorn the inner borders of the extended arm. The central part both in head and the arm is devoid of any embroidery.

Asmangir or the canopy is another furnishing accessory which was abundantly used inside the palace, courtyards, terraces, gardens and other outside locations. The famous peacock throne of Shahjahan, which was installed in the *diwan-i-khas* (hall of private audience) of the Red Fort, Delhi, has been described as the major symbol of Mughal wealth, the detailed description of which has already been given in the preceding chapter.[7]

A painting from National Museum (Pl. 37) showing Raja Prithvi Singh of Datia with his sons dating circa 1736-1752 A.D. depicts a beautiful canopy in green colour having resplendent gold work which may be embroidery. A specimen of *asmangir* (Pl. 38) is said to have belonged to the time of the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. This *asmangir* of silk fabric shows an element of decorative device during the decline of Mughal art. Earlier very often the richly illuminated border decorations composed of conventional trees, stylised flowers, galloping stags, running lions, revealed clearly a very skilful manipulation of a number of central Asian / Iranian decorative designs. The trends in conception and execution were more towards large and heavy proportion, which was presumably the requirement of the objects.

The red *asmangir*, however, has a border design of conventional repetitive floral motifs in gold gilt thread, which appears to be *ath dane ki nargis* along with *neem ki patti* and *ded khar ki patti*. The span of design is on the running borders, the corners and the central spaces (Pl. 38).

The outer covering of this *asmangir* is of thick cotton. The piece is important since it shows the technique called *vasli*, where a thick cardboard is put beneath the motifs; to give the desired raised effect, gold gilded wire is used. Also such work was generally done on velvet for *kanats* etc. but since *asmangir* hangs below the ceiling or acts as a sky cover, the light weight fabric was preferred, since silk cannot carry very heavy embroidery (Pl. 40).

Another *asmangir* of early 20th century from Rajasthan is shown in Plate 41. The base fabric is maroon velvet and gold gilded wire is used for couching. The embroidery depicts a jungle scene where a lion is hunting the deer. Similar depiction was found in the carpet of Victoria and Albert Museum (Pl. 17) of 18th century. However, here the jungle scene includes variety of flowers, birds and insects. Such designs became popular in the provincial courts after the decline of Mughal court and many of the *zardoz* from Delhi remember such designs.

We may say that after the decline of the Mughal rule, there was a perceptible decrease in the gorgeousness of *zari*-work on tents, *kanats*, etc. With the slow decline in patronage from the Mughal courts, the *zardoz* faced a major

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setback. At this juncture the artisans sought patronage from the provincial courts and carried the design prevalent in Mughal courts to the provincial courts. Plate 42 depicts a lady at bath under the canopy, a miniature from National Museum, highlighting the transitional influence in provincial courts. Another miniature painting from the same collection portrays Maharaja Anup Singh of Jodhpur seated under an *asmangir* which has resplendent gold work (Pl. 43).

Other furnishing accessories include various types of cushion covers, pillow covers (*takiya* cover) of different sizes and shapes. A painting of circa 1759-1806 A.D. shows Shah Alam seated on the throne with an elaborately gold-embroidered *masnad* (bolster) cover on the back in red fabric. This painting is from National Museum collection (Pl. 44). Another painting describing raga Hindola from the same collection Uniara circa A.D. 1770-80 also shows delicate gold embroidery on *masnad* cover (Pl. 45). During the examination of the actual specimens, it was uniformly observed that the *kalabatoon* wire was used instead of pure metallic wire for embroidering the bolster covers. The soft and supple *kalabatoon* wire was not injurious to the body on touch. The pillows were in all sizes and shapes, square, semi-circular, circular. The designs on the covers of these supports matched the design of the floor spread.

Plate 46 shows a rectangular *masnad* in green velvet. This is from the Red Fort Museum in Delhi and belongs to the court of the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. The worn-out condition of the velvet is indicative of the regular use of this *masnad*. Here the design is *kamal ki bel* (lotus creeper) repeated all along the *patti* i.e. the strip joining the two sides of the *masnad*. Four *turanj* motifs are embroidered on the four corners. The central space is left bare.

A cushion cover in semi-circular shape from Salarjung Museum, of late 19th century, is seen in Plate 47. Here the central motif, a floral pattern, radiates in *butis* and *pattis*. Such are the conventional *buta* designs which were very popular during the 18th-19th century. Later on such designs were embroidered on purses etc. These cushion covers are further decorated with sequin.

The oval *masnad* cover in green and red velvet from Bharany collection (Pl. 48) is similar in design depiction to the *jaminposh* described earlier (Pls. 28, 30, 32); the design of the gold embroidery is confined to the ends of the red velvet, the green velvet has silver sequins placed graphically. The *masnad* covers were tightened by fastening the string; for this purpose a red cotton tape is stitched on the end.

India has a long tradition of offering presentations to the nobilities. The presentation or exchange of items was done in the *thal* which was normally circular in shape. The goods were arranged in containers or otherwise in the *thal* and were covered with a fabric cover. *Zardozi* embroidery was extensively used on these covers. Generally the ends of these covers had gold or silver-braided tassels. Although no illustrative example is shown here, but the palanquins were also covered with such gorgeously embroidered cover. Tray covers or *thal posh* were eloquently adapted by the Britishers in their day-to-day utilitarian items.

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Plates 49 and 50 depict two *thal posh* from Victoria and Albert Museum collection bearing Acc. Nos. 4756/3667 and 4757/3487. The red and black base is embroidered with gold silver wire.

It is customary for the royal entourage to have a large number of accessories known as insignias. Flags, *qur, alam,* parasols, umbrellas, trappings are included in these items. There are descriptive accounts in the Rehla of Batuta. He speaks of horses bearing the insignias of khilafat, which according to his description were girdles of silk, woven with gold. There were others which were ornamented with white silk embroidered with gold. Batuta has specifically mentioned that these decorated horses were not used by anyone but the Sultan himself.[8] Batuta has made here a very clear distinction between gold weaving and gold embroidery. It is apparent that the Sultan had this insignia beautifully embroidered for his personal use on his horses, the other senior members of the royalty could use the horses with woven girths. At another place Batuta mentions, "out of these sixteen elephants the Sultan rides one, in front of which the saddle-cover studded with the most precious jewels is carried."[9] Here although the specific symbolisation in the form of the design is not mentioned, it is clearly stated that the elephant used by the Sultan could be easily distinguished from others. Describing a royal procession Batuta narrates, "and before him was carried the *ghasia* which is a saddle-cover studded with gold and precious stones."[10]

Ghasia is a term which is not found to be used elsewhere, but Mehdi Hussain, the commentator of Ibn Batuta, says, "*Ghasia* was carried before the king being the equerry as a sign of majesty among the Egyptian members." Here *ghasia* is referred to as an insignia of the royalty and not the trapping.[11] In spite of these elaborate descriptions and specifications of items in the text, we have no extant example of the objects belonging to the Sultanate period. But information regarding trappings, insignias etc. during the Mughal period seems to be more complete due to the availability of textual and pictorial materials. Shahjahan Nama of Inayat Khan has referred to the presentation of horses and elephants received and given to the honoured guest. "On the 16th of Shawwal 1061 (2 October, 1651) Muhyi-al-din, the ambassador, presented to His Majesty a saddle cloth sewn with pearls."[12]

The miniature paintings of different schools show various kinds of animal trappings. It was customary to adorn the horse, camel, donkey or an elephant. A folio of the miniature painting of Persian tradition narrating the story of Sheikh Sanah and Christian Maiden, circa 1595 A.D., shows the Sheikh visiting the maiden. He is seen riding on what looks like a donkey. Although the gait of the animal is horse-like but long ears and elongated face place it closer to a donkey. The borders of the red trapping are adorned with gold embroidery (Pl. 51). Another painting from Mughal school belonging to Jahangir period (1605-1629) depicting a scene of camel fight interestingly shows both the camels wearing black girdles with gold embroidery in geometric pattern. These are from National Museum collection (Pl. 52).

The saddle cloth was also known as *zinposh*. John Irwin has illustrated two of them, which are said to be in the collection of the *toshkhana* of the Nizam of

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Hyderabad, Deccan, belonging to the 17th century. While describing this *zinposh*, Irwin writes, "The foundation is a double thickness of loosely woven cotton fabric, upon which is an applique pattern in pieces of red, green and yellow velvet and a ground embroidered in twisted silver gilt thread."[13] This saddle cloth (Pl. 53) is in line with the design of the *zardozi* style prevalent during the 17th century, where the ground is extensively embroidered in metal embroidery and the patterns are done with silk thread; here, however, the patterns are in velvet which is appliqued.

Stylistically there is a difference between *zinposh* and *jhool*. The former as described above remains tightly fitted on the body of the animal whereas *jhool* elaborately hangs down the sides.

A *ragini* painting from Malwa School of circa A.D. 1680-90 shows *zinposh* on horse and *jhool* on elephant. The painting describing *raga* Nata depicts a battle-scene. The gold work on the body of the *jhool* and *zinposh* is elaborate (Pl. 54). Another painting of Ragmala series circa A.D. 1785-90 shows an elephant *jhool* with orange body and green border (Pl. 56). The design here is more specific on the borders and the corners while the depiction of Nat Ragini of circa 1680 A.D. (Pl. 57) shows the horse trapping covering the body of the horse upto the neck.

An actual specimen of a camel trapping (Pl. 58) depicts the *buti* pattern in gold gilded wire on the maroon velvet body. The design is repetitive. The *zinposh* has a hole in the centre which suitably fits the hood of the camel. A Sikh style miniature painting showing Krishna hurling the wheel is a scene from the Mahabharata. Two horses in the forefront show the trappings with gold work (Pl. 59).

A camel saddle in accoutrement from Jodhpur also shows gold embroidery (Pl. 61).[14] Later references to the trappings are available in the Imperial Gazetteers,[15] where brief accounts of various animal trappings with metal embroidery testify to the continuity of the tradition till the abolition of princely states. Delhi, Patna, Murshidabad, Agra, Banaras, Lucknow, Gulbarga and Aurangabad were some of the important centres of metal embroidery where animal trappings were adorned with gold embroidery. We come to know from the contemporary records that Deccan was an important centre where animal trappings with heavy *karchobi* on velvet were manufactured. These massive forms of animal decorations were adapted by provincial courts. Later the same opulence was seen to impress the British emperor. So on their visit to Delhi when the Delhi *Durbars* were held in 1903 and 1911, the British Highness rode on the elephant, the *jhool* for which was worked upon by the *zardoz* of Delhi. The memories of the two Delhi *durbars* were recounted by the senior members of few *zardoz* families in Delhi who had worked frivolously for these *durbars*. They emphasized that apart from royal processions, it was customary in Delhi even for the religious processions and marriage processions to adorn the animals with tastefully embroidered covers. These massive forms of decorations were mostly composed of floral and geometric devices often accompanied with elaborately embroidered insignias of the state court. This important item of metal embroidery has totally disappeared from the scene.

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Parasol

The umbrellas and parasols (*aftabgir*), which formed essential part of the noble regalia, right from the Sultanate period, were also profusely embroidered in metal; unlike the trappings, these were often studded with precious and semi-precious stones. Although such parasols might have formed an important part of noble processions, they have not been well preserved. The main reason perhaps being the possible looting of the precious stones used in the embroidery.

The earliest references to parasols are again found in 'Rehla of Batuta', where he has described sixteen elephant seats reserved for the use of the Sultan, having over each of them a silk parasol.[16] The elephants in front of the Sultan were adorned, the standards and sixteen parasols being attached to them. The latter were hoisted, some of these were embroidered with gold and some bejewelled. One of the parasols was raised over the Sultan's head.[17]

We find a brief account of parasols which were also termed as *chatars* in Ain-i-Akbari[18] where a number of jewels were affixed to adorn a *chatar*.

Tavernier,[19] while describing the famous peacock throne, also spoke about two umbrellas. These umbrellas were placed at a distance of about four feet on each side of the throne, and were of crimson velvet, embroidered and fringed with pearls.

A late example is from Bharany's collection showing *karchobi* work on an umbrella.

Birdwood[20] has left a detailed description about gorgeous gold embroideries on the velvet cloth of the umbrellas, which were made in Lucknow, Gulbarga, Aurangabad and Hyderabad. Hunter also referred to embroidered umbrellas.[21] All these clearly indicate that the contemporary provincial courts continued to display the same adornment on umbrellas, which were popularly known as *chatar*. After the abolition of these courts, umbrellas were found to have been used in religious processions alone. But by that time the adornment had lost much of its gorgeousness.

The embroidery on parasols was done for the temples. These were placed above the idols. The religious proceedings also earmarked the use of metal embroidered parasols. Crafts Museum has such examples in its collection [Acc. No. 84/6740 shows figures of Krishna and his cow, child Krishna amidst dense foliage (Pl. 62)]. In the late fifties craftsmen of Delhi were commissioned to embroider such parasols in bulk for various religious institutions. Although the use of velvet umbrellas for deities is still popular, the fashion of embroidering with metal thread has now declined altogether.

Badges, Banners, Uniforms etc.

The articles falling under this category mainly refer to decorations, presentations and identifications related to social and religious institutions. The items embroidered generally have well-defined designs which may be affixed on any dress, material or may be carried independently.

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Their history goes back to as early as the Sultanate period. Ibn Batuta[22] mentions, "He conferred on him a silk robe embroidered with gold called *surat-i-sher* i.e. the image of a lion which it bears on its front and back." Batuta has also mentioned another robe which he has classified as *mahairibi* robe. *Mahairibi* is derived from the Persian word *mihrab* meaning an arch. Thus the robe has on its front and back the embroidered design of an arch. Batuta has also written about the standards made of silk embroidered with gold.

The Futuhat-i-Firozshahi [clause 48][23] says that Allaudin Khilzi gifted to Allaul-Mulk a golden *zardozi* robe which had a figure of lion. In the same text [clause 14] he mentions embroidering of banners with golden thread which are not more than four fingers. Here the imposition is in terms of the design restricting it to a minimum width of four fingers. Accounts regarding the motifs given by Batuta and Firozshah refer to *zari* embroidered robe with lion, which was perhaps the insignia during the Sultanate period. During the Mughal period a specific terminology was used for items falling under royal insignias. These devices were called *qur*. The Ain-i-Akbari has described *qur* as a collection of flags, arms and other insignias which follow the king wherever he goes.[24] It is therefore clear that these insignias embroidered with metal thread were very significant during this period. The forms of insignias at times were different, but the symbolic meaning of depicting insignia was universally accepted. The lion shown in Pl. 14 also depicts insignia of provincial courts.

Coming to the next period, we find that the tradition of symbolic designs in various forms continued even in the provincial courts. Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad, has a good collection of *mehtabgiri* procession fans or standards which accompanied the Nawabs of Hyderabad. These standards were also embroidered with metal embroidery (Pl. 63).

It is understandable that adornment of military dress with metallic embroidery was a tradition from the earlier period. But lack of evidence both pictorial or written restrains us from corroborating it. However, such adornments are continuing even today. Plate 64 shows the detail of a flag staff in the miniature painting showing *Raga hindola*. Plate 10 bearing Acc. No. 567A / 1952 from Victoria and Albert Museum, London, depicts the insignia of the English Crown. This is said to have been worn around the neck so that the insignia hangs in front. This is simple embroidery on white satin. It was used by royal personages visiting the Delhi durbar as mentioned earlier. The Imperial Gazetteer[25] also mentions uniforms with metal embroidery. T.N. Mukherji[26] while describing the Glasgow exhibition writes, "Gold and silver embroidered banners were made both at Lucknow and Banaras." Many articles for use in the church were also embroidered with gold and silver. These were exported to Europe from various parts of India. The Shia flag from Victoria and Albert Museum collection is another religious flag taken out during the Moharram procession (Pl. 65).

After independence, when the provincial courts were abolished, the symbolic meaning of the insignia was lost, and thus there was very little demand for these objects. The *zardozi* community then faced a massive setback. But a new channel was opened. A large number of *zardozi* craftsmen from the

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walled city of Delhi took up assignments of embroidering small badges, insignias etc. mainly for foreign market, particularly for Europe and America. As described in the socio-economic section, a major part of the *zardozi* community now produces such articles in their domestic *karkhanas*. There are large varieties of designs pertaining to this category. The designs show no specification for floral, faunal or geometrical devices, instead the new motifs are a blend of all the three. The articles, whether small or large, are worked with fine *karchikan* work.

Costumes and Related Accessories

The rich costume tradition of India has been exemplarily decorated with gold embroidery. A variety of unstitched lengths of fabrics worn in different ways were gorgeously worked with *zardozi*. The discussion in this section starts from the unstitched fabric used as costume or accessories like the belt, *patka, kamarband,* shawl, *misir, chunri, dupatta, sari*. The variety of unstitched lengths have different purposes. Sometimes used for covering the upper body like shawl or else used as head veil (*chunri, dupatta,* scarf), a dress like *sari* or just a belt used for tightening the costume.

Plate 65 showing Raja Dhirajpal of Raghogarh (Madhya Pradesh) of circa 17th century highlights the costume details. The magnanimous size of the *patka* with beautiful gold design is seen to be held around the waist of the king as well as his attendant. Several words like *prota, pota* mean an embroidered or patterned cloth.[27] Another word *futa* which was found to occur in the travel accounts of Ibn Batuta represents a belt for tightening the dress. If we accept *futa* as a piece of cloth to be tied around waist, it is then similar to *patka*. But the latter has sometimes dual function of serving as a waist-band as well as a turban. With the emergence of the Sultanate power in India during the 12th and 13th century A.D., when the *zardozi* craft occupied a very important position, this embroidered cloth used for tying around the waist or sometimes head locally called as *patka*[28] became very popular.

Another miniature painting, where Raja Bhav Singh is visiting the court of Bahadur Shah I, depicts the waist-girdle also known as *kamarband* with elaborate gold work (Pl. 67). Examples from Crafts Museum collection (Pls. 68, 69 and 70) depict that thinner fabric like muslin, *tash*, brocade cloth is generally used as the base material. A variety of floral motifs are done with silk, silver gilt wire, flat wire (*badla*) using simultaneously sequin, *sitaras* and beetle wings. Lucknow Museum has a *patka* embroidered in gold gilded silver *kalabatoon* wire on red velvet. This *patka* (Pl. 71) is dated around 18th century. The design here seems to have affiliation with the *zardozi* objects found in the Red Fort Museum collection (cf. Pls. 38, 39). The nobles from the Mughal court in the later period started favouring belt which could be used as the arms borne for keeping their swords. An example is reported from the Red Fort Museum (Pls. 71 and 72). It shows a *bel* and *patti* motif on red silk fabric in gold gilded wire. These belts were adapted commercially with modified designs and forms in European and American market and continued to be commercial success (Pl. 143).

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Shawl is the particular article of dress, which could well signify a scarf, a mantle or at times a turban and which could be square, rectangular, triangular or even circular. Generally the style of wearing a shawl guided the flow of design. We get graphic descriptions of shawls with *zardozi* work in the Ain-i-Akbari.[29]

There are references, as cited by Manrique[30] in 1630, to borders ornamented with fringes of gold, silver and silk thread, indicating that shawls were embellished with gold and silver thread in the early Mughal period. However, there are no extant examples illustrating presence of such shawls prior to the late 18th century. Khwaja Yusuf, while promoting embroidery on woven shawls, encouraged use of *zari* wire for decoration. The main industry was located in Punjab and Delhi. Plates 75 and 76 show a shawl from Victoria and Albert Museum collection. This is a black woollen rectangular fabric left plain in the centre. The *tanzir* or the side border has narrow stripe of repetitive floral motif in gold gilded wire. The *pallu* on both ends has two bands of red wool fabric interspersed with black bands. Each of these has dense embroidery in gold colour. The joints are skilfully concealed with the embroidery.

Another example from Bharany collection (Pls. 77 and 78) shows dense embroidery in silk, wool and *kalabatoon* wire on the whole body of the fabric, making the base invisible. The *pallu* has repetitive paisley motifs. Plates 79 and 80 depict red wool fabric with gold gilded wire embroidery. Here again the concentration is to decorate the sides and borders. Plate 81 depicts a shawl *bel* which is stitched on another fabric. Plate 82 is a *doshala*, again a woollen shawl in which multicolour stripes are joined together with gold *kalabatoon* embroidery infused with floral designs. The stripes are already worked with *zardozi* motifs.

Satbanteli, odhani, chunri, dupatta are other varieties of unstitched garment adorned with gold embroidery. A *satbanteli* (Pl. 83) depicts elaborate medallion design in gold, silver *zari* wire and spangles on the centre of the side border in the area which covers the head when this is worn. The side borders have the running design. *Satbanteli* is worn by the proud mother of a first-born baby among the Rabari community of Kutch, Gujarat.

In other parts of the country *chunri*, much like *patka*, is made of a thinner fabric, generally transparent. There are several representations of *chunri* in the miniature paintings, showing exemplary use of the beetle wings, precious stones and gold wire in ornating this piece of garment. Plate 84 depicts a *chunri* worn by the bride. Here the blue-coloured centre is followed by the red yellow and red stripes of continuous border, which are joined to each other with fine embroidery stitches. The body design is in *ari bel*, while border has repetitive floral motifs and *bharat* design.

Sari, one of the most important untailored dresses, has been replenished with metal embroidery for a long time. The *pallus* and border of the *sari* continue to be decorated with *zari* embroidery representing floral and creeper designs. Among the Parsi community it is customary to have velvet border embroidered with *zardozi* design stitched on the *sari* border. Plate 85 shows a fine tissue *sari* from Victoria and Albert Museum having embroidery with gold

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tinsel *sitara* and gold *gizai* wire. The design is floral depicting *karan ka phul* motif. Red silk thread is used to embroider the centre of the *phul* which appears like vermilion mark on fair body. Plate 86 shows resplendent embroidery with beetle wings and metal wire on red fabric.

Plate 87 depicts a purple neck scarf which is in the collection of Victoria and Albert Museum. This is an illustrative example of the small unstitched costume accessory embroidered in *zardozi* technique. Here the span of the design is the same as in the Kashmir shawls but in smaller dimension.

The evidence of earliest embroidered clothes for the upper and lower garments of men and women of high social status is found in historical texts.[31] During Maurya and Sunga periods *antariya* and *pattika* are seen to have been embroidered with floral motifs. Though this is conjectural, these embroideries were possible in gold and precious stones (Pl. 1). Gold embroidered fillets are mentioned to be used by richer classes of women during the Satavahana period. *Antariya*, the upper garment worn by men, is reported to have gold embroidery. The Gupta period also makes mention of few costumes embroidered in gold and silver.

The custom of embroidering clothes by profuse use of gold and silver became very popular. Batuta in his writings has mentioned that Sultan Muhammad Shah granted Nasir-ud-din a gilded robe of black *abfasi* colour embedded with precious stones together with a turban to match the robe.[32] At another place, he has described among the presentations to *amir* Ghadda a silk robe of blue colour embroidered with gold which was studded with precious stones, together with a cap to match. Batuta has also described presentation of linen embroidered in gold by the Sultan to newcomers on the 4th of Shawwal (8th June, 1334).[34] Miniature paintings of the Sultanate period also show Sultans dressed up in robes decorated ostentatiously (Pl. 6).

During the Mughal period, dresses with gold and silver embroidery were much in fashion with the royalty and the nobility. The treasure of Akbar included a vide range of stitched garments which were embellished with metal embroidery.[35] Bernier while describing Shahjahan's appearance in the court in his accounts wrote, "The king appeared seated upon his throne at the end of the great hall in the most magnificent attire, which was of white and delicately flowered satin with a silk and gold embroidery of fine texture." He also mentioned other stuffs striped with gold and silver and also turbans embroidered with gold.[36]

A folio from the story of Sheikh Sanah and Christian maiden depicts the Sheikh sitting with the holy men. The Sheikh is seen wearing a *choga* with gold ornamentation. The canopy on the top also has a gold fringe. This miniature painting is from the National Museum collection (Pl. 88). Stylistic costumes of Mughal and provincial courts are depicted in Pls. 89 and 90.

Various texts of the 19th century mention different types of dresses embroidered with *zardozi* work. As regards the nature of embroidery on dresses and costumes, the work is reported to have been of fine variety of *karchikan* for female costumes, whereas the *karchobi* for male costumes. The distinction in the fineness of embroidery for women and men perhaps characterises the delicacy and roughness of the two sexes.

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Various museums in India and abroad are credited with having a good collection of costumes with *zari* embroidery from the late 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Several kinds of male robes like *choga, achkan, angarkha, jama, bugal-bandi,* coat have various spans of ornamental embroidery. A variety of majestic robes in woollen fabric have dense or sparse embroidery. In *bugalbandi* and the coat the embroidery travels along the tailored cut on the front, the edges of the sleeves, the slits and the hem (Pls. 91, 92). In *achkans* and *chogas,* the front and the back yoke, the shoulder, the cuff, the border and the edges of the front opening are heavily embroidered (Pls. 93 to 96). The rest of the body is either left plain as in Pl. 91 where the base fabric is *kani* style woven material or the design moves along the boundaries of the flowered pattern on the fabric (Pl. 106). At times the body is covered with repetitive pattern of lobes (Pl. 98) or designs along trailing stems (Pl. 105).

Sometimes the design on the body is in *ari bel* (slanting creepers) at intervals. Generally *kalabatoon* wire is employed by a *hath ari,* the hand-operated awl, which became very popular in the late 19th century.

The *bugalbandi* (Pl. 91) has *kamdani* work. Here the embroidery in gold wire and precious stones was done on the satin fabric. This was stitched on the desired parts along the seams and edges. Flowering scrolls and paisley motifs are repeated (Pls. 99-101). Among the desert clans of western India, the *zardozi* skills are amply found to occur on white cotton robes. The *abho* have thick *minakari* work in silk and *zari* wire with repetitive medallion design (Pls. 102-104).

Under the British influence, the Indian nobility slowly started abandoning their traditional attires and adopted the British costumes. Among the men's robe, coat was one of the important upper garments which was adopted all over the country. However, since it was a prerogative with the nobility to have their garments embroidered in *zari* wire, the coats were also tastefully embroidered. Plate 107 shows the back of the coat tastefully embroidered much in the same span as the *choga* (Pl. 95).

Coming next to the women's costume, it is observed that there was more emphasis on adorning the lower garments such as *lahenga, sharara, ghaghra, garara.* These garments provided vast span for the embroiderers to show their skills. The work profusely remained in the *kamdani* style. Plate 108 depicting ragini Vinod shows the nayika wearing a *lahenga* probably with gold work. Plate 91 depicts a *sharara* i.e. a lower garment with two legs but having a very broad circumference at the lower end; the waist end remaining generally near the waist size. The width in the lower part is achieved by adding tapering strips of cloth. Sometimes it requires about 9 to 12 metres of fabric to make a *sharara.* This is a popular Muslim dress and is worn even today by elite on auspicious occasions. The *sharara* described here is from the Crafts Museum collection mainly in green crepe satin. The lower portion or the *gher* has alternate stripes of green, blue, pink and mauve crepe satin fabric. There is continuous band of *zardozi* embroidery along with *gota kinari* to conceal the joint. The body of the garment is embroidered in *jali* pattern with *buti* motifs in each *jali* on the upper part. This pattern is intercepted by the vertical bands at intervals. There is repetitive creeper (*bel*) design on the *gher* (Pl. 109).

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The *lahenga* in Plate 110 is green satin fabric restricting embroidery to the *gher*. The embroidery is the floral pattern mainly in the gold gilded wire intercepted at places with silver cups placed in shapes of a flower. A *ghaghra* from Gujarat in plain dark maroon silk fabric shows small *kairi butis* placed in squares in gold gilded wire. The lower end has a gold braid (Pl. 111). Another *lahenga* worn by the bride is shown in Plate 112.

Kurti, kurtani, kameej, choli, jumper, angiya are the upper garments for women. These have different lengths and are worn with *salwar, sharara, ghaghra* or *lahenga. Kurtani* is worn together with *lahenga* (Pl. 113). Another *kurti* is shown in Plate 114. Plate 115 shows a *choli* in orange silk fabric with bands of green silk on the sleeves and the waist. This exquisitely embroidered *choli* is worn with white muslin *lahenga.* Ornately embroidered *kanchali* (Pls. 116-117) in red silk fabric has *ari bel* design on the back and the front part shows creepers. The borders on the sleeves, the waist and the back have repetitive floral patterns.

A stylishly cut jacket on the European tradition is depicted in Plate 118—a combination of green and red velvet. This jacket with full sleeves shows stripes running with neck line, shoulder seam, arm joint where the green and red fabric are joined at sleeve ends. This tight-fitting jacket was perhaps worn with a skirt. Plate 119 depicts another jacket from the Victoria and Albert Museum collection having profuse gold work on front and back yoke.

Vaskets worn both by men and women are customarily worked with *zardozi*. Several museums including the National Museum in New Delhi have vaskets in their collections. Plates 120 and 121 illustrate a mauve-coloured vasket with polyester fabric as the base. This is worked with *hath ari*. The base cloth is removed from the area with dense *jali* work in the front and back portion. These parts reflect the colour of the garment over which the jacket is worn. There is running floral pattern on the waist, arm, front opening and neck border and certain portion of the back, which appears as appliqued work.

Having discussed the costumes we come next to the related accessories. Headgears, shoes, purses, belts are the important accessories, which have *zardozi* work. A variety of turbans and caps from several Indian provincial courts reflect usage of *zardozi* work.

The tradition of gold embroidered accessories was in vogue during the Sultanate and Mughal period. Though there are no extant references in the texts but the miniature paintings give vivid references. Shiraj painting from the folios of Sheikh Sanah and Christian Maiden shows the nobleman and his visitor wearing turbans with gold work (Pl. 122). This painting is of circa 1595 A.D. There are ample evidences of a variety of headgears and footwear in the Mughal miniature paintings and paintings from the provincial courts. Plate 89 shows a portrait of Shah Shuja, son of Shahjahan, circa 1680 A.D. The stylish turban and *jutis* show *zardozi* work.

Plate 123 shows a crown-like cap in red velvet cardboard bands, gold, silver wire and sequins. A six-petalled blooming bud is shown emerging from the tight-fitting circular band. This type of cap which was similar to the European crown became popular in Oudh court.

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From the 18th century to the middle of the 20th century, caps with *zardozi* embroidery were used by both Muslims and Hindus belonging to all social strata. The base fabric was mainly velvet or satin. These were made in *vasli* technique i.e. a cardboard was always used between two layers of fabric. Circular caps as shown in Plates 124-129 were worn by upper caste Hindus, particularly Brahmins, Baniyas and Jain community. The caps used by the Nawab of Hyderabad were conical in shape (Pls. 130-131). The embroidery on the cap is done by laying a lining on the under-surface. A cardboard piece is placed between the two fabric layers for stiffening.

Such caps were functional and elaborate. These were worn with the formal dress. This cap seems to have emerged from *dopalri* where two circular halves are stitched together. Elaborate use of beetle wings along with sequins lends indigenous charm to this cap.[37]

The traditional footwear such as *jutis* continued to be embroidered with gold silver wire. During the Mughal period the paintings (Pl. 89) show the royalty in elegant footwear with *zardozi* work. The upper part of *juti* known as *uparla* is worked on a velvet pasted on cardboard. These uppers are then stitched with the sole or *tala*.

Plate 2 shows a variety of *uparla* worked in *zardozi karkhana*. Plate 3 is from the collection of the Indian Museum. This kind of *juti* has a *burzi* or curved extension of *uparla*, which depicts the high status of the wearer. Such *jutis* were worn in Bengal. A knee high shoe from the Victoria and Albert Museum shows stylistic adaptation of Indian skill on European design (Pls. 5, 132). The blue and red velvet is covered with couched floral patterns in *badla* wire along with sequins.

A ladies *juti* has more delicate form (Pl. 4). Here the *uparla* has red and gold base, worked with semi-precious stones, beetle wings and sequins along with *zari* wire. The front part has floral creepers while *burfi* design, recurring geometrical forms in gold wire decorate the hind part.

The contemporary style of the fashion footwear is seen in Plate 133 where glass beads and stones replaced the semi-precious stones.

The Indian theatre and temple have made splendid use of *zardozi* work in several categories of articles such as curtains, mask, *mukut*, costumes, jewellery and at times even the figures of gods and goddesses. Plate 134 shows detail of a velvet curtain from Yadgiri gutta, Andhra Pradesh, where an old temple of Narasimha (incarnation of Vishnu) exists. The temple situated on a large mound is believed to be the original hillock where Vishnu in Narasimha incarnation emerged. The red velvet curtain is drawn when the deities are resting or taking meals. The motif shows a *kubhakam* (vessel). This may be compared with the curtain used for background decoration during *raslila* performance in Mathura (Pls. 135 and 136). Here the curtains are patterned in the architectural framework of a court and temple. The next panel shows a large peacock on full panel for the court scene. Various lines of satin fabric are embellished with *gota* and *zari* work.

Costumes in theatre are popularly worked in *zari* wire (Pls. 137-139). Plate 137 depicts a king wearing a *mukut* made with cardboard, paper and

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silver wire. *Pattu* (neck-band), *bazuband* (arm-band), *kada* (bracelet) etc., which were embroidered, were also used in theatre and by the dancing girls. T.N. Mukherji[37] has also mentioned such specimens of embroidered jewellery. During the British period, these items found a popular market in Europe.

Mask is an important theatrical camouflage, which adds rhythm and rapidity to the spirit of communication. Ram Nagar in Uttar Pradesh is known for the *zari* masks used in theatre. Plates 140 and 141 show the demon and Ravana masks.

Purses and *batuas* used in theatre and otherwise are also embroidered with *zari* and beads. Plate 142 shows a few types of purses. The base fabric is generally black, red, blue or green velvet. Plate 143 shows a purse with silk thread and *zari* wire embroidery.

Before the advent of electricity, fans of several kinds were used by the nobility and the common people. The hand fans have lighter embroidery but sometimes with heavy frill. Plates 145 and 146 are two examples of rope fans from the Red Fort Museum and the Crafts Museum showing *zardozi* work. Fans in the Bharany Collection show geometrical patterns in heavy *karchobi* style (Pls. 147-148).

During the 18th and the 19th century, the Jain religion patronized *zardozi* embroidery extensively. The artisans were commissioned to embroider religious book-covers, boxes and *gomukhis*. A Jain miniature painting (Pl. 149) from circa 1500 A.D. shows different religious symbols occurring in Jain religion. The box for keeping religious books (Pl. 150) shows sun, moon, *navgunjar*, bull, elephant, *kalash, swastik*, fish and religious symbols embroidered in gold and silver wire and sequins on red velvet. The box is rectangular and is embroidered on sides and top. A *gomukhi* in red silk fabric is embroidered on both the sides with gold silver wire and sequins (Pl. 151). The motifs show sun and moon and Krishna, the shepherd, herding cows. The *gomukhi* is worn on the hand while counting the sacred beads. Stylistically the figures on these religious artefacts show expressive folk motifs which are different from conventional floral and geometric motifs.

The Muslim religion bans idol worship. But it is usual to have ornamental writing illustrating the sacred script of Kuran. These are known as *tugra*. They have been embroidered in metallic thread since early times. Phyllis Ackermann while discussing textiles of early Islamic and Seljung periods maintains that Khuzistan, Shustar, Sirsa and Gurdaspur were important centres of ornamental writing.[38] Shustar was the place where the cover with ornamental writing for the Kaba was first introduced.

The earliest form of *zardozi* in Persia is found to have been associated with ornamental covers for Kaba, a tradition which also existed in the robe of honour made during the Sultanate period. Khalifa was generally written ornamentally on such robes. The *tugre* done by the zardoz are no doubt the extension of the ornamental religious writings of earlier periods. Plate 152 shows how *tugra* is kept in an *alla* (niche) in a Muslim household. Plates 153 and 154 are examples of *tugre*. Generally red, blue or black velvet base is embroidered with silver and gold thread. Plate 155 depicts a fascinating gold *hukka* and its spread.

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During the early 20th century when *zardozi* craftspersons were searching for markets other than the courts, tie case, pin cushions, mantle-covers and many other such articles were embroidered in this style at Delhi chiefly for use of the Europeans.[39] Some such items continue to be produced for foreign as well as the local market. Plate 156 shows a tie case while Plate 157 shows costume jewellery for the European market.

Embroidery on decorative panels, game cloth for *chopad* is seen in Plate 158. The naturalistically done peacock and architectural depiction of Taj Mahal are among the popular designs (Pls. 159-161). Rakhi and Christmas hangings are also seasonally made with *zardozi.*

An overall glance at the objects with *zardozi* work from the Mughal period to contemporary times provides us a panoramic view of the craft showing gradual changes in the form of objects. What is important to notice in this context is that the motifs found in *zardozi* do not show any radical change. As a matter of fact several motifs of flowers, creepers and *jalis* are found to be percolating down the ages without any major alteration. The changes noticeable in the time frame are mere stylization of the earlier motifs with few additions or deletions with respect to the altered forms.

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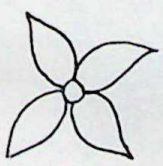
Footnotes

1. The literary reference to these items is found in Rehla of Ibn Batuta, 1956, pp. 62, 67.
2. Ain-i-Akbari mentions *sayabans* of gold embroidery, p. 47.
3. Manrique's inventory of the treasure left by Akbar in 1605 includes tent hangings, umbrellas, rings and other accessories needed for adornment of the temporary houses in a camp. While describing the *Nauroz* festival, Rogers writes, "In the Diwan-i-am erected a tent some sixty paces broad, covered all around with canopies of richest and most finely embroidered velvet", 1915, p. 243.
4. Irwin, J. and H. Hall, 1973.
5. Mehta, R.N., 1956, pp. 53-55.
6. Bernier, 1891, p. 248.
7. Tavernier, 1713, p. 331.
8. Rehla of Ibn Batuta, 1956, p. 58.
9. Ibid., p. 60.
10. Ibid., p. 127.
11. Mehdi Hussain writes, "Ghasia was carried before the king being the equerry as a sign of majesty among the Egyptian members." Ibid., p. 127.
12. W.E. Begley and Desai, 1990, pp. 460, 496.
13. Irwin, J., Indian Embroidery, p. 7.
14. JIAI, Vol. 1.
15. IGI Provincial Series, Punjab, Vol. I, p. 80.
    IGI Bengal, Vol. I, 1909, p. 161.
    IGI United Provinces, Vol. I, 1908.
    IGI India, Vol. 6, 1886, p. 602.
16. Batuta, 1956, p. 60.
17. Ibid., p. 127.
18. Ain-i-Akbari, p. 52.
19. Tavernier, 1713, p. 331.
20. Birdwood, Industrial Art of India, p. 282.
21. Hunter, India IGI, Vol. 6, 1888, pp. 602-603.
22. Batuta, 1956, pp. 128-9.
23. Futuhat-i-Firozshahi, 1956, pp. 13-14.
24. Ain-i-Akbari, p. 52.
25. IGI Provincial Series, Punjab, Vol. I, p. 80.
26. Mukherji, T.N., 1888, p. 372.
27. Moti Chandra, 1973, p. 114.
28. Irwin and Hall termed these girdles, 1972, pp. 21-22.
29. Ain-i-Akbari, II, 15.
30. Manrique, I, 428-9.
31. Vyas, N., 1958, p. 48.
32. Batuta, 1956, p. 70.
33. Ibid., p. 79.
34. Ibid., p. 125, Batuta, 1923, p. 206.
35. Smith, 1915, p. 242.
36. Bernier, 1891, p. 268.
37. Interesting details on Indian hats are described, Crill, R., 1985.
38. Mukherji, T.N.
39. Ackermann Phyllis, 1939, p. 1996.
40. Mukherji, T.N., p. 373.



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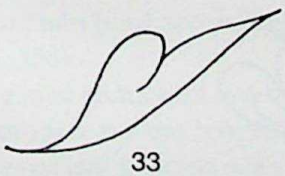

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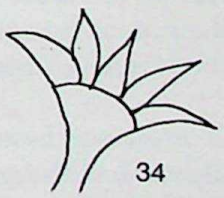

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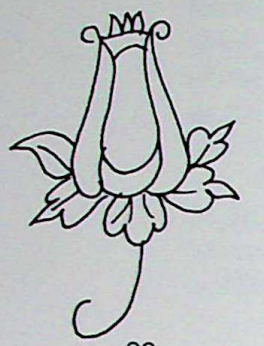

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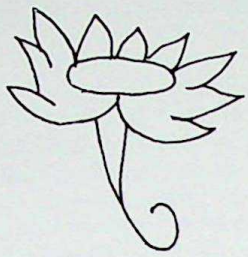

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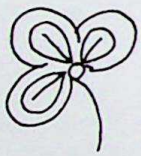

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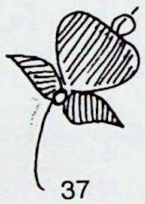

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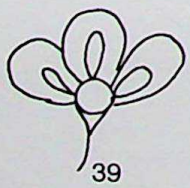

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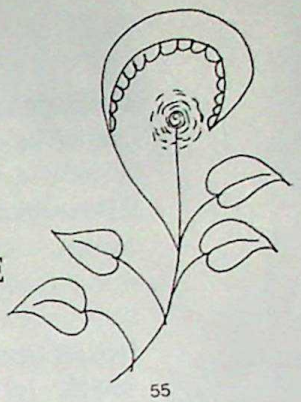

TECHNICAL EXPOSITION: DESIGN ENSEMBLE

Gold has been used for decorative work from early times, because of its comparative rarity which makes it valuable and its material properties of malleability and ductility. A single ounce of gold can be beaten into sheets so thin that when placed side by side upon the ground, they will cover 250 square feet. It is equally ductile, the same weight of metal can be drawn into a thread so fine that it will stretch over a mile in length. Silver, though a harder metal, is less remarkable for these two qualities. It is therefore largely used as an alloy to counteract the inherent softness of gold as the latter cannot withstand constant abrasion. Gold, in common with all other metals, becomes brittle, when hammered and it is because of this that the process of annealing is necessary. Gold is beaten until it becomes red and expands and rearranges the molecules which were compressed and displaced by the previous hammering. It also readily mixes with a baser metal when in a molten state. It is because of this valuable quality that the numerous solders containing gold and silver in admixture with copper and other metals are obtained (Pl. 162).

Gold is used in carving, casting, repousse, hammering, encrustation, filigree or open wire work, chasing and engraving, embroidery or the laying of metal, weaving and plying into leaves. The ductility of gold and silver allows the finest of the wires to be drawn. This is done by using a flat, perforated steel plate called *jantri*. The holes are of gradually decreasing size, each hole tapering slightly in its passage through the plate. The process of drawing wire is a simple mechanism, under which a thin strip of gold is cut and one of the ends is filed until it is slender enough to pass through the largest of the holes. The strip is then seized by a pair of very stout pliers, and as it is drawn through the hole, it acquires both shape and length. This operation is repeated and the wire is drawn through the various sized holes until it acquires the desired breadth. The wire is then bent according to the shape required for the particular design (Pls. 163, 164).

Technically, this process of reduction is a tedious manual operation. The successive decreasing holes increase the length of the wire, while decreasing its diameter. This highly technical process was observed by several scholars like Meadows Taylor, Sir George Watt and Digby Wyatt in early and mid nineteenth century.[1] Meadows Taylor describes the process picturesquely: "For gold thread, a piece of silver about the length and thickness of a man's forefinger is gilded at least three times heavily with the purest gold, an alloy being previously most carefully discharged from the silver. This piece of gold fused on silver is beaten out to the size of a stout wire and is then drawn

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through successive holes in a steel plate, until the wire is literally as fine as a hair. The gilding is not disturbed by this process and the wire finally appears as if of fine gold. It is then flattened in an extremely delicate and skilful manner. The workman seated before a small and highly polished steel anvil about two inches broad, with a steel plate, in which there are two or three holes, set opposite to him and perpendicular to the anvil, draws through these holes as many wires, two or three as it may be, by a motion of the finger and thumb of his left hand, striking them rapidly but firmly with a steel hammer, the face of which is also polished like that of the anvil. This flattens the wire perfectly and such is the skill of manipulation that no portion of the wire escapes the blow of the hammer in its descent."[2] Silver wire is produced by exactly the same process except that the bar is not gilded.

Pure gold wire, though frequently used in jewellery, cannot be technically used in weaving or embroidery. Thus the lavishly used lustrous gold wire is in reality silver wire coated with pure gold.

Another description of the manufacture of gold wire observed at Burhanpur about a century and a half ago, is given by Digby Wyatt,[3] quoting M.M. Martin. 'Four common bricks are laid on an earthen floor and a layer of crucible containing a quantity of silver is deposited and being covered over entirely with ignited charcoal, the fire is fanned by a *punkah*, to increase the heat; additional charcoal being occasionally added in small quantities. In somewhat less than an hour, the silver melts and is run into moulds by means of which it takes the form of small rods. A sheet of gold is then well washed and boiled in fresh lime juice and water.

'Whilst it is still warm, it is rolled completely round the silver rods and the process of plating the silver with gold is thus completed. The next operation is that of drawing the rods through perforated steel plates...and thus gradually lengthening them until they have obtained the requisite tenuity of wire. To receive still further compression, they are passed between small rollers and flattened on an anvil by the blows of a hammer, until at length they assume the form of exceedingly minute ribbons. A thread of silk is then suspended with a spindle at the end, a corresponding spindle is attached to one of these golden ribbons and the spinner who sets both in motion so regulates the contact of one with the other, as to cause the gold wire to completely cover the whole of the silk thread. Thus prepared it is done up in skeins and sold.'

Such wires of silver with gold sheeting encasing a silken skein were used by the weavers and embroiderers. This traditional process is still seen in jewellers' workshops in Indian villages and towns. The thinness of the wire required for jewellery is more than that used for weaving or embroidery. Besides, gold/silver wire without the support of silk thread cannot be manoeuvred by a weaver's deft fingers.

The main feature of the wire drawing industry involves hammering and this is described by Sir George Watt. The process for manufacturing the gold and silver wires remained the same except, for the fact, that for producing the gold wire, a bar of silver was wrapped once or twice with gold leaf and placed in the furnace, till the gold fused and united with the silver. The bar of silver,

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now changed into golden colour, was inserted into a round opening (in a massive sheet of strong iron). The protruding portion was seized by a powerful clamp and forcibly pulled through the opening. The thick wire thus produced was passed through the series of openings of successively smaller sizes, till it gradually assumed the thickness of a hair and became many miles in length. The ductile property of gold brought out a thread from the silver bar which was uniformly thin and completely coated with gold. The next stage involved the flattening of the wire. The skill at this stage is shown in the process of adjusting the motion of a series of wires across the anvil with each stroke of the hammer which flattened the wires uniformly. Silver wire was produced exactly in the same process except that the bar was not gilded (Pl. 165).[4]

Although embroiderers continue to use silver wire, the main feature of the gold wire drawing industry has undergone tumultuous changes. The industry reached its zenith during the Mughal period, patronised by the emperors and maharajas of the provincial courts.[5] The earlier handcrafted operations required exquisite care and deftness and have now been overshadowed by power-operated melting furnaces, moulds, hammers, rolling mills, drawing machines, gilding equipment, flattening machines and winding machines.

For tracing the history of the technique in chronological sequence, we are to depend on the contemporary records. We come to know that during the heyday of the craft, gold and silver tinsel were available in Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Banaras, Murshidabad, Ahmedabad, and Burhanpur and Ahmednagar.[6] As a matter of fact, all large towns, especially those which were the seats of Muslim culture and administration, were noted for the manufacture of such wires. This lent an exorbitant variety of gold and silver tinsel materials to be employed in *zardozi* embroidery (Pl. 166).

The preparatory process of the wire is not only mechanised but there is also a drastic change in the raw materials which have been substituted from time to time for the gold leaf which was gilded to the silver mould. Gold wire is called *zari*, derived from *zar*, a Persian word for gold. The manufacture of *zari* is conveniently divided into several stages. The first stage is *potai* or *pavthan*, which involves bar making and wire drawing. The bars are called *pasa*. In the next process, *tarkashi* or *tania*, the wire is drawn through a series of plates, where in the final stage, diamond or ruby dies are used. The third and the last stage of wire drawing is *badla*, the flattening process. The flattened wire or *badla* is the main variety of the drawn wire.

Apart from this *salma, kora, dabka, chikna, gijai, zik, chalak, tikora, kangri, champo, kinari, khichcha* are some of the other varieties of gold decorations used to accompany *zari*, especially in *zardozi* embroidery. The physical properties of these varieties lay specific roles for each type of wire to be used in a particular manner or sequence, to highlight a part of the design. The stems of the flowers or the outlines are generally done with *gijai* wire, which is a circular thin stiff wire. The wire is so called because it resembles the shape of a *gijai*, an insect found in the hills. Since *gijai* is a coiled wire, it cannot be threaded through a

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needle. Before laying it on the design, the wire is stretched and then stitched on.

Khichcha is another interesting variety also in a coiled form, though it is transparent. Thus when coloured thread is passed through *khichcha*, the colours are reflected giving the embroidered portion a polychromatic lustre. *Tilla*, the third variety, is a flat wire which cannot be threaded and is stitched on to the material directly. *Salma*, a wire coiled in a zigzag manner, is used as an applique and is also stitched on. *Kora* and *chikna* are flexible coiled varieties. The former has less lustre in comparison to the latter and pieces are cut according to the design and laid on the cloth by passing a threaded needle through the piece. To highlight a particular area, a kind of spiral twisted flexible wire with a sheen is used. The wire is thicker than *chikna* and is used for making curved designs. *Dabka* is a coiled thin wire through which a threaded needle is passed. It is tied to the surface and has shine and polish. *Nakshi* is similar to *dabka* except that it is thicker. A round *zari* with a hole in the centre is called *chakri*, whereas a *sitara* looks like a star or a spangle. *Zik, chalak, kangri* are the various other decorative motifs used to highlight designs. The various forms and shapes are available in a variety of thicknesses.[7] The traditional use of the thinner varieties is now substituted by the thicker ones (Pl. 166).

Such varieties of gold wire are widely used for embroidery or laying. Except for *badla* which was used to weave the *tash* fabric, these wires in their pure metallic state are not operative on the loom. Hence the *zari* manufacturers followed the fourth process of winding the thin *zari* wire on silk or cotton thread. The resultant twisted yarn known as *kasab* or *kalabattu* was usually used to weave brocade, borders, *gota, kinari* and to make braidings. Weavers or the *bunkars* showed their weaving skills in the *kasab* variety, whereas braiders were called the *patwa*, a distinguished class of workers, who handled the *kalabattu* wire. Apart from the varieties of *zari* wires mentioned above, it has been prevalent among the *zardoz* to embellish the embroidery with precious and semi-precious stones and beetle wings. Records of laying precious stones along with gold and silver wire are available from the Mughal period.[8] The umbrella over the famous peacock throne was embroidered in gold, silver wire along with sapphires, rubies, diamonds, emeralds, topazes etc. Hunter,[9] in this context, wrote that the jeweller tends his aid to Indian embroidery. Describing a shawl made by the order of the late Gaikwad of Baroda, Sir G. Birdwood wrote that the 'shawl was composed entirely of inwrought pearls and precious stones, disposed in an arabesque fashion and is said to have cost a crore of rupees. Although the richest stones were worked into it, the effect was most harmonious; when spread out in the Sun, it seemed suffused with iridescent bloom.'[10]

Presently, however, the precious and semi-precious stones have been replaced by glass beads of different colours. Various shapes, sizes and colours of glass beads are used profusely along with the different shades of silk threads, to lend charm to the pieces embroidered. Sometimes all the fillings are done with glass beads and only the outlines are done with the metallic wire.

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Thus, these beads form one of the important raw-materials in *zari* embroidery. One may, however, guess that this tradition of using precious stones was a part of a venture to break the monotony of using gold and silver wire.

Indian peninsula has a large number of attractive beetles, which is a distinct group of insects. Their main characteristic is the possession of hard wing covers or elytra. These become hard for protection and are composed of a substance called karatin. These are not functional wings. There is another set of membranous wings beneath elytra which are stretched for flying. Coleoptera Bupreslidae Sternocera are the beetles which are also called jewel beetles or metallic wood borers. These emit fluctuating colours which may range from green to dull bronze to bright emerald to blue and violet depending on the light rays. These beetles mainly live in *sal* forests and many a time colonies of the beetles perish in the sal grooves leaving the elytra, which do not decay for a long time. The lustrous property of the beetle wings made them extremely fascinating materials for superimposed decorations. The corners or the centres of the wings were perforated and used along with semi-precious stones by *zardoz* (Pl. 86).

After having described the varieties of gold wire etc. it is relevant to discuss the deterioration of the content of gold and silver in wire manufacture. The process and technology of the inferior varieties of wire are linked to the high costs of gold and silver in relation to the survival of craft. The marked degradation of the quality has led to specific terminology with regard to the manufactured wire. The wire using gold leaf was called *sone ka tar* and silver wire *chandi ka tar*. The traditional process involved wrapping of a silver bar with gold leaf in three to four folds for its complete gilding. The wire produced by this process remained lustrous throughout. Initially, total gilding was substituted by partial gilding, which produced a wire called *sone/chandi ka tar*. But this was very expensive and the process of deterioration intensified as artisans had to experiment with other cheaper materials, which were also acceptable to the public. However, the high prices as well as the change of consumer from royalty to the common man, all contributed to a drastic transformation of the craft and the types of metal threads manufactured could by no means be called real *zari*.

The initial change took place when the wrapping of gold leaf was replaced by a gold solution. The silver wires drawn in variety of thicknesses were gilded in gold solution. Though the lustre of such wires appeared to be similar to the earlier variety, the texture did not last long. Simultaneously an alloy of silver mixed with a fair amount of copper was introduced and the wire thus produced was much cheaper but had a tarnishing property. This wire was called *jhootha tar*. Now a distinction appeared, *asli tar* and *nakli tar*. *Asli* specified the gold wire for which the process has been described already. As a further mark of the downfall, the copper bars drawn into wires were gilded by an electroplated solution of gold and silver. This wire, *sona gilat*, had an instant charm but the tarnishing quality of copper brought heavy losses to both the gold embroidery and weaving. Gilding through this process was mostly confined to two colours, gold and silver, but the consumer's inclination

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towards metallic wire in variegated colours led to the manufacture of polychrome wire.

The gilding of wire was done through three main processes—electroplating, oxidisation and dyeing or lacquer varnishing. These were the technological advances over the conservative process of hot plating. In the mid-twentieth century a yarn known as lurex entered the Indian market. This yarn also introduced variegated colours which took over a wide portion of the weaving sector. Lurex yarn is comparatively cheaper and has a smoothness of feel and a certain garish charm.

Under the banner of change and scientific advancement, the lustre of gold was replicated in a polyester fibre. Later gold/silver wire created by an alloy of copper was substituted by lurex. The newest invention is polypropylene or a plastic wire. This wire in gold and silver colour has the same lustre as real gold wire or zari with a similar texture which is different from the texture of the cotton/silk yarn.

Interestingly, weavers and embroiderers have given the prevalent threads a number of names. *Sachcha kam* refers to work with real gold zari, *jhootha kam* is the copper plated wire, while *nakli kam* is the lurex wire and *plastic kam,* the polypropylene wire. Polychromatic wire whether in lurex or plastic is called *rangin kam.* A relevant point is that today *jhootha kam* has more or less disappeared because of the tarnishing property of the copper base which makes the fabric look faded. While *sachcha kam* or *asli kam* symbolises wealth, *plastic kam* or *rangin kam* has a mass appeal, which has given an impetus to the craft in terms of weaving as well as embroidery. In the process its native properties have been forgotten, even though it has retained its charm.

The question which comes to mind is what should be the nomenclature of such diminishing glories. Perhaps, the term *zari* should be retained and used sparingly for *asli kam.* Presently, this discrepancy is obvious because of the cost differences but is perhaps not deliberately recognised. The chemical wire, although distinguished as *plastic kam,* is given the same platform as real *zari,* as it has been able to recapture the lustre of gold. However, the introduction of the *plastic kam* has resuscitated the glorious art of gold *zari* weaving and embroidery.

The manufacture of *zari* is a recognised cottage industry. The main centres are at Surat and Varanasi. Apart from these, there were other centres at Jaipur, Agra, Hyderabad, Ajmer, Bombay, Delhi, Paithan, Lucknow, Patna, Bareilly, Bhopal, Tiruchirapalli, Madras and Bangalore.

Surat is presently the largest manufacturing centre, followed by Varanasi. Apart from real imitation and *plastic zari* threads, Surat and Varanasi excel in manufacturing *zari* lace and borders. The latter two varieties can conveniently be placed in the *zari* handloom industry. The centres at Jaipur and Ajmer specialise in *zari gota* and *zari thappa* work.

The important centres utilising gold wire in various products are Srinagar, Amritsar, Delhi, Agra, Bareilly, Bhopal, Bombay, Lucknow, Patna, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Kanchipuram. Of these Agra, Lucknow, Bareilly, Bhopal, Delhi, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Patna specialise in *zardozi.* The handloom sector in

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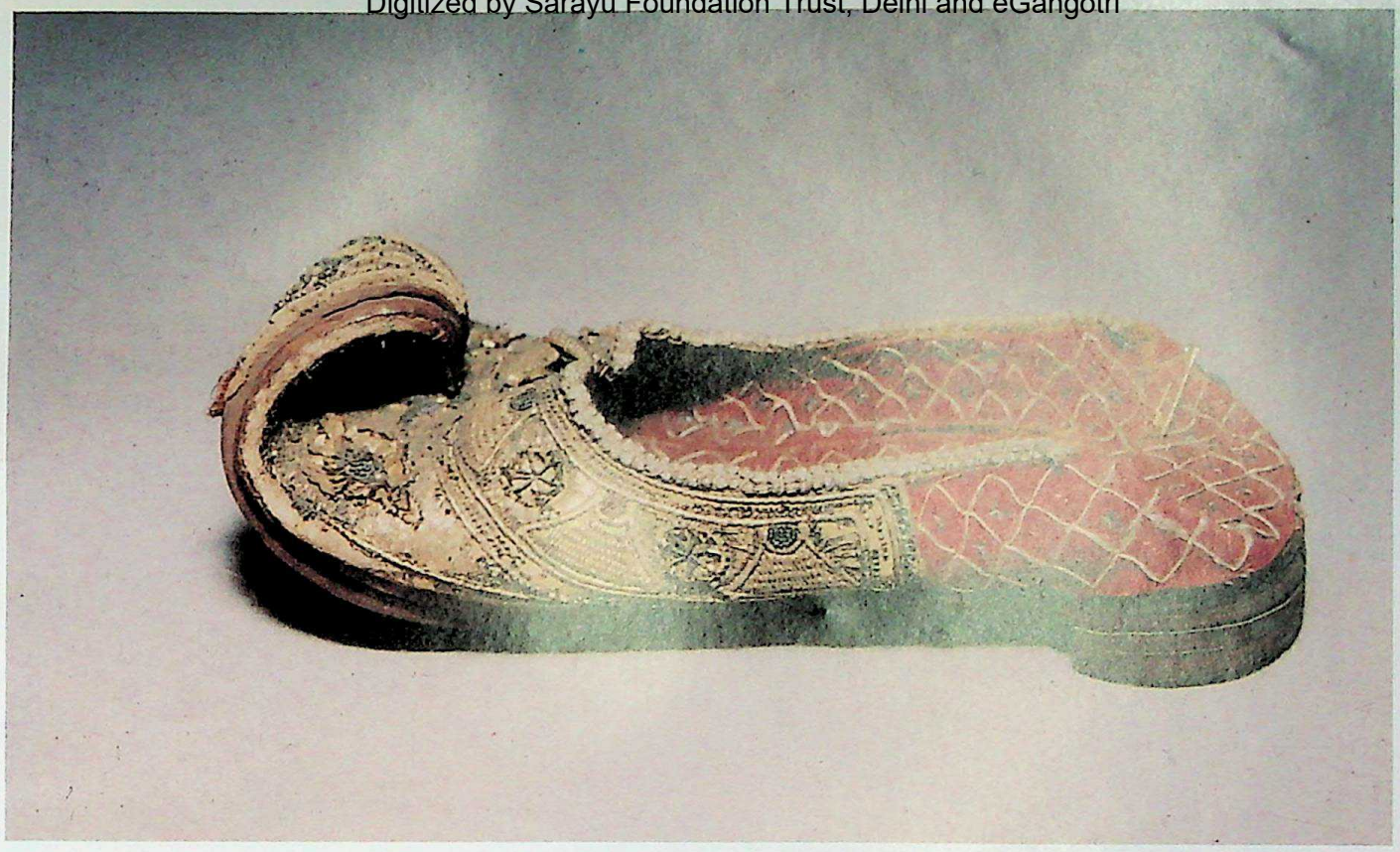
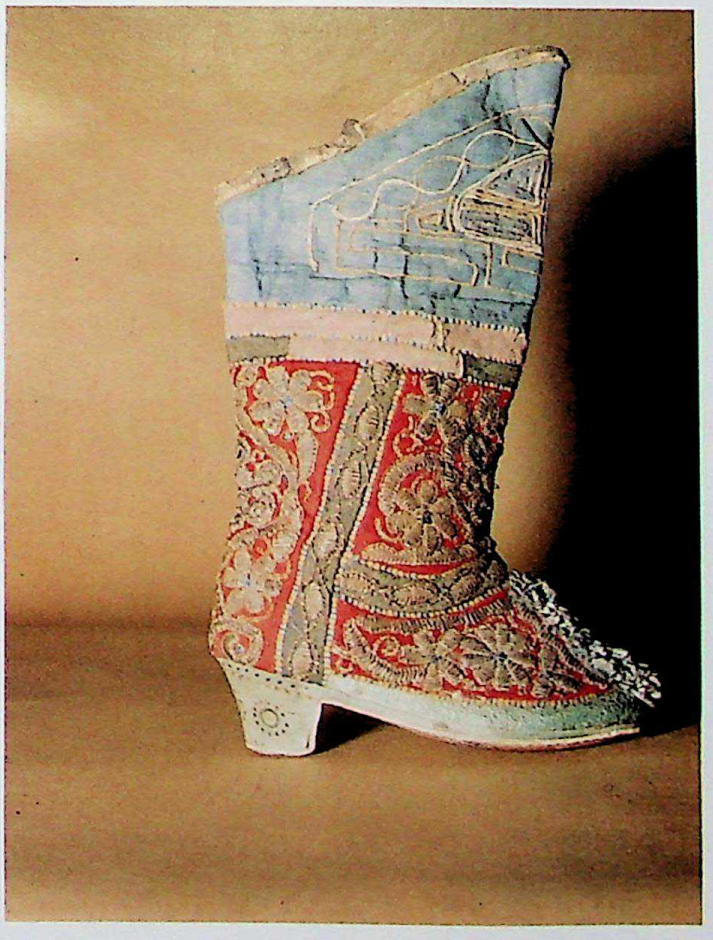


4. The footwear worn by noble ladies.

↓ 10. · Royal insignia.

5. Knee-high boots.→



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9. Miniature painting showing *Darbar* of Shah Alam, end of 18th Century.

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15. Folio depicting Ragini.→

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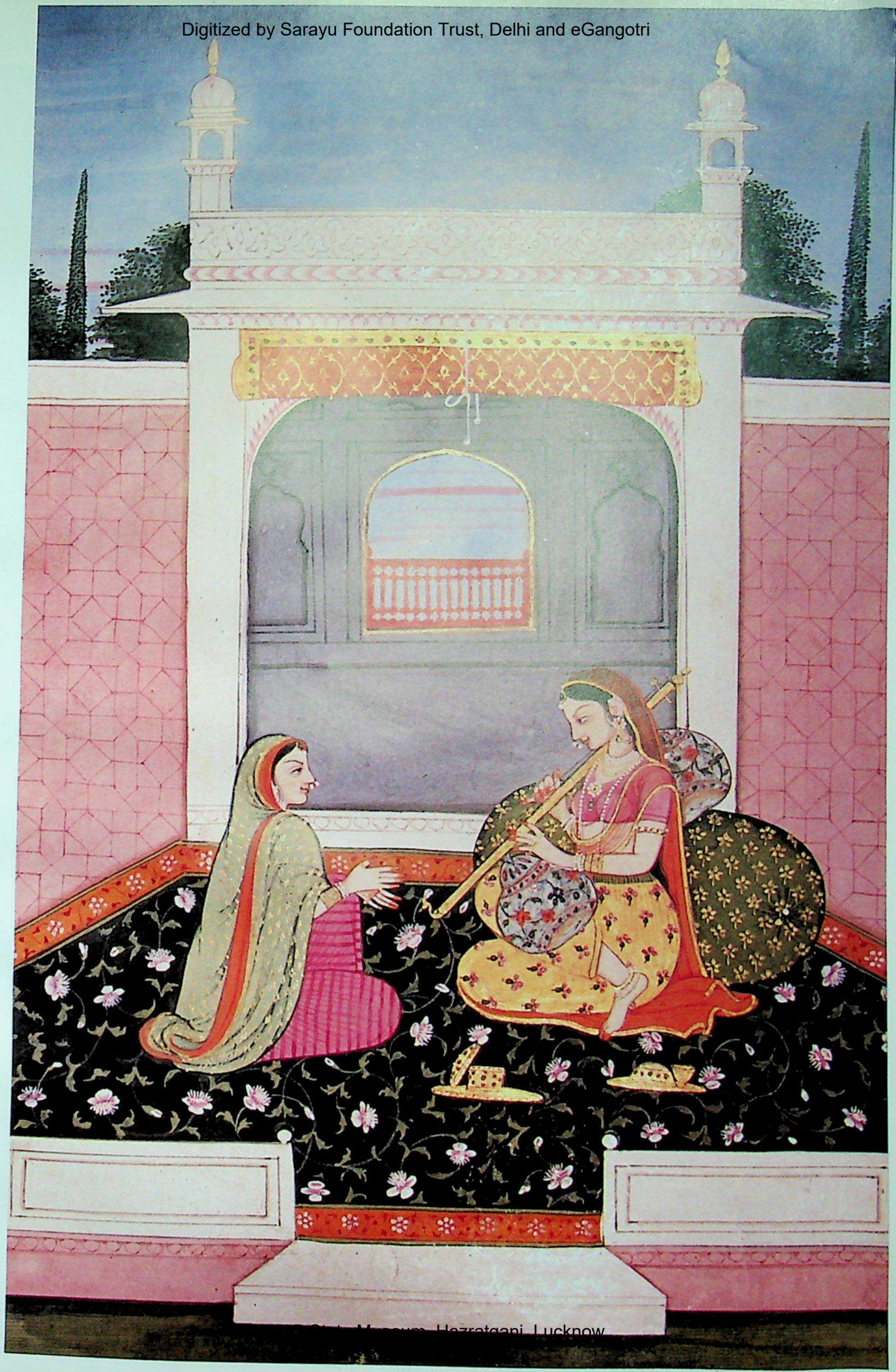

State Museum, Hazratganj, Lucknow

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17. The central panel of 18th century *takhtposh*.

16. *Takhtposh*, complete view.

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18. Detail of architectural monument of *takhtposh*.

19. Detail of tiger hunt depicted on *takhtposh*.

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20. Detail of the hunter on a galloping horse.

21. Detail of the deer running for life.

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22. Detail of two-wheeled locomotive.

23. Detail of peacock.

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39. Border detail of No. 38.

40. Central part of canopy.

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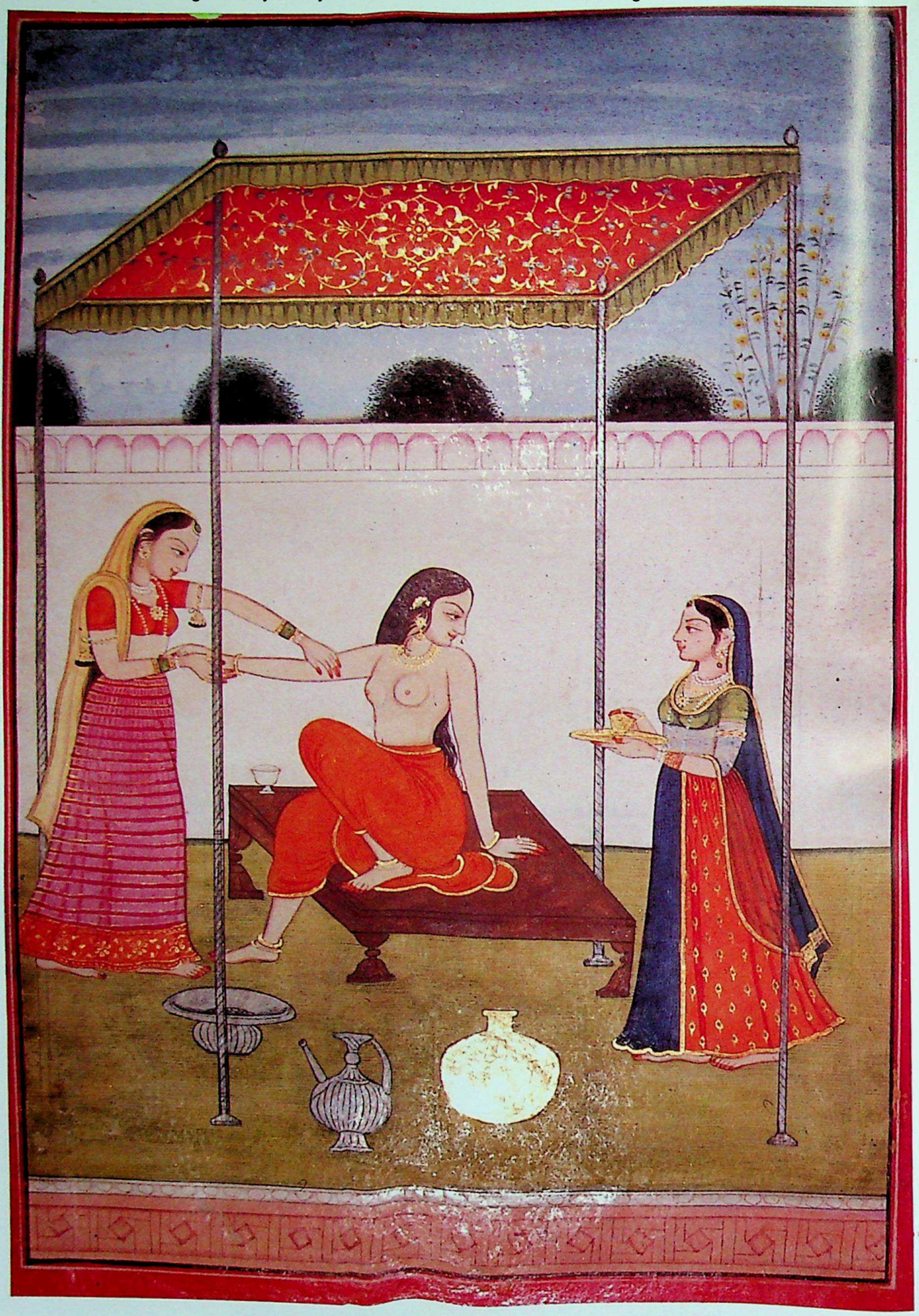

42. Miniature folio of Ragini Neelangi.

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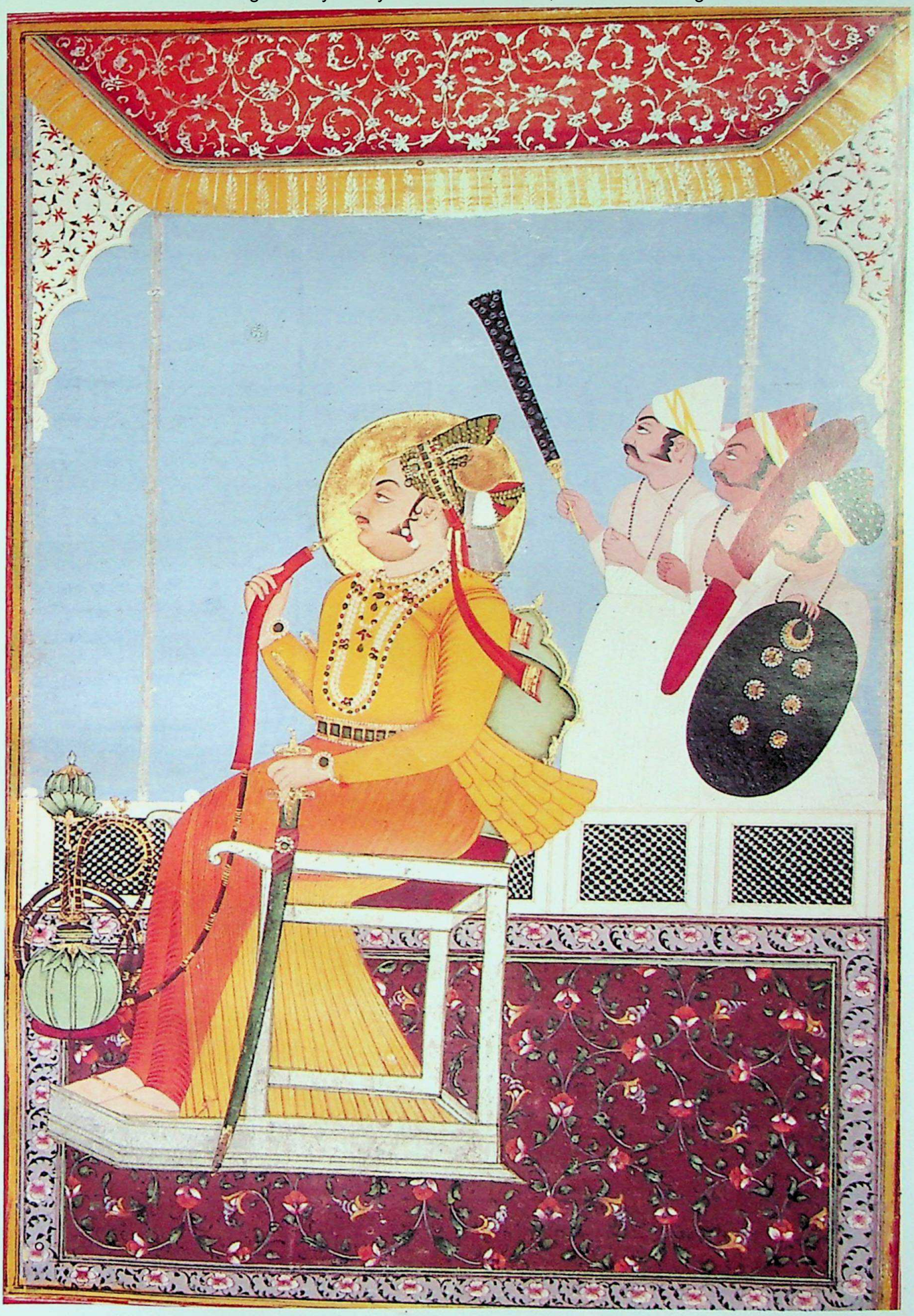

43. Maharaja Anup Singh of Jodhpur.

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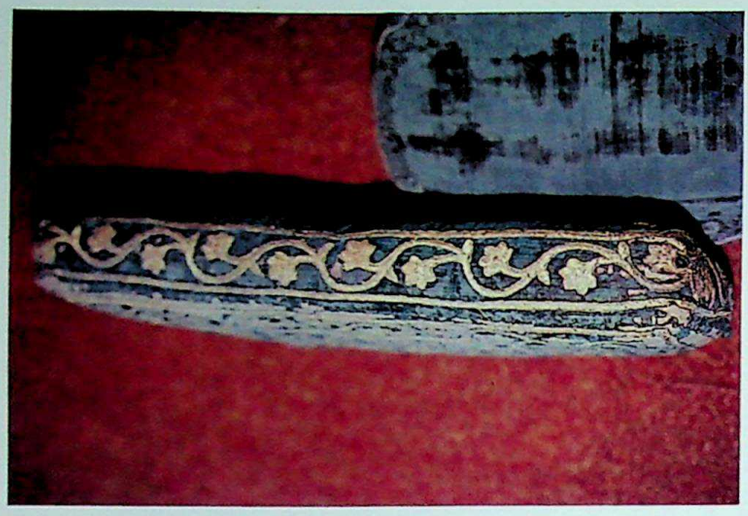
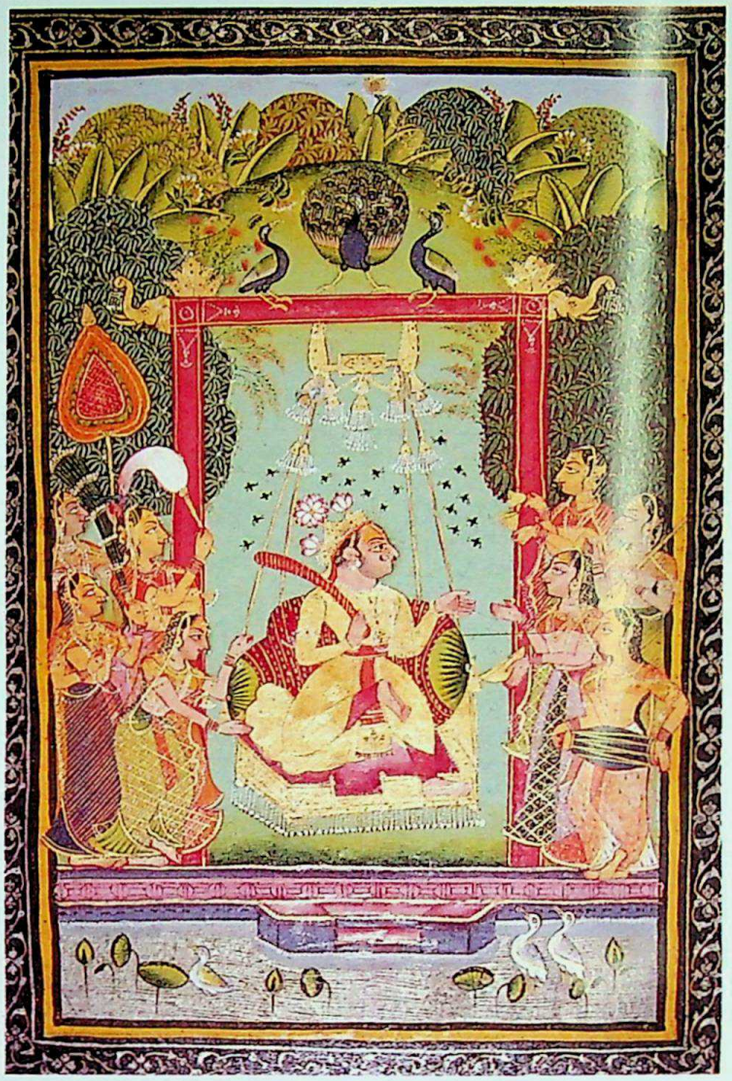


48. *Masnad* cover.

46. Cushion cover. (above)



45. Miniature painting depicting Raga *Hindola*.

44. Miniature folio showing Shah Alam seated on a throne.

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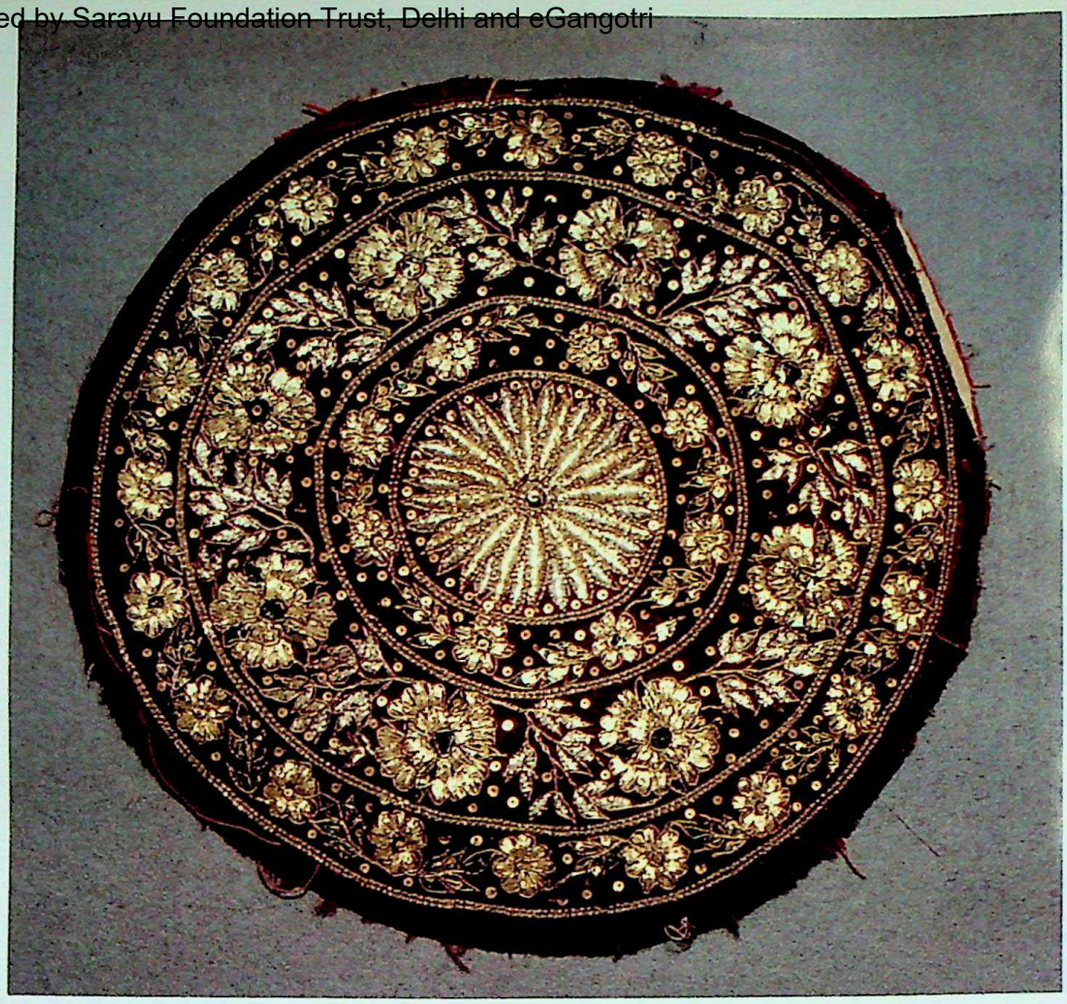

49. *Thalposh* with *thalinuma* design.

50. *Thalposh*. Early 20th Century.

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51. Folio from the miniature series narrating story of Sheikh Sanah and Christian Maiden.

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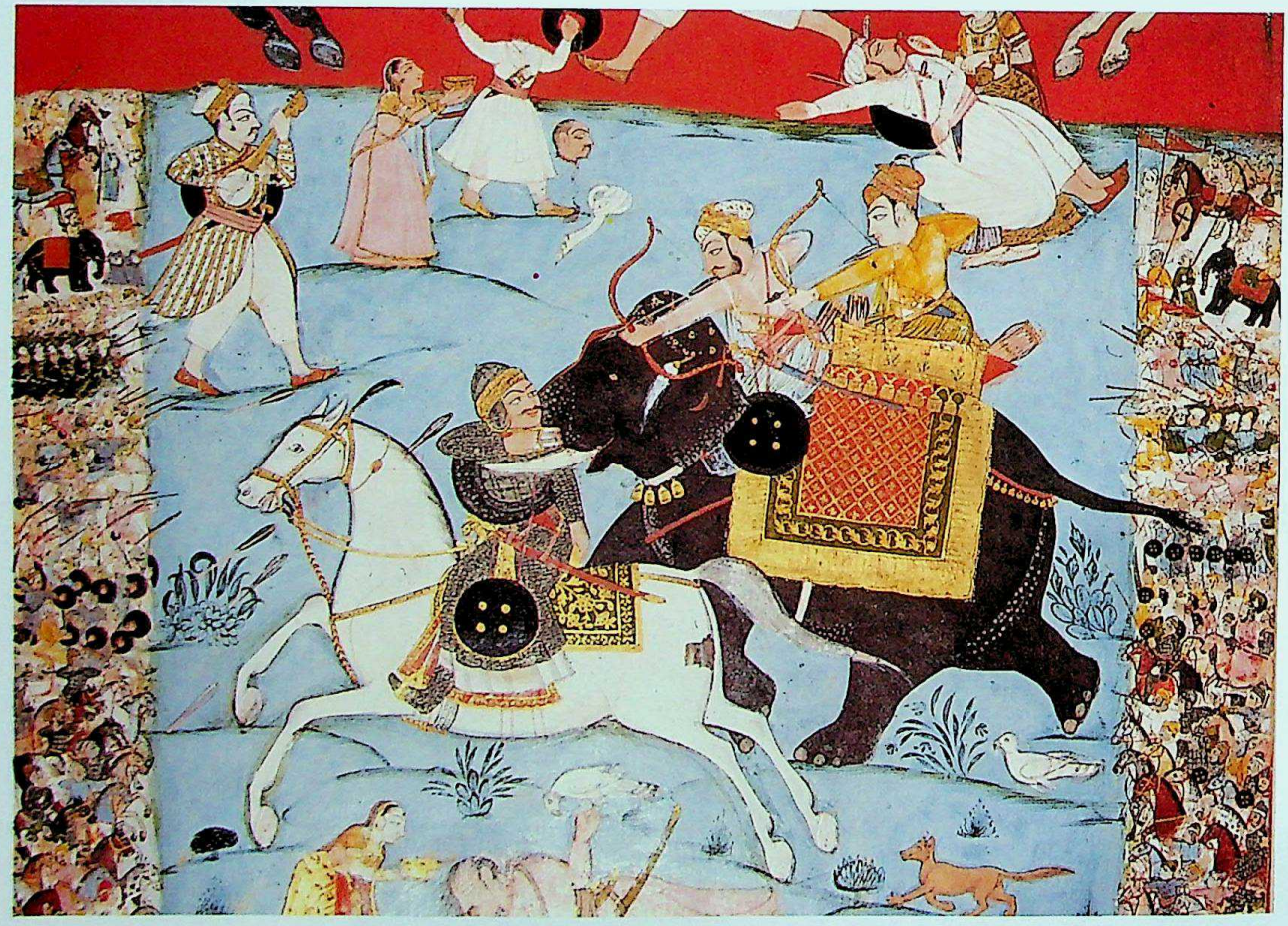
52. Camel fight, a painting from Mughal school.

55. Detail of No. 54.



54. Miniature from Ragini series, Malwa School, showing raga Nata.→

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56. Raga Dipaka.

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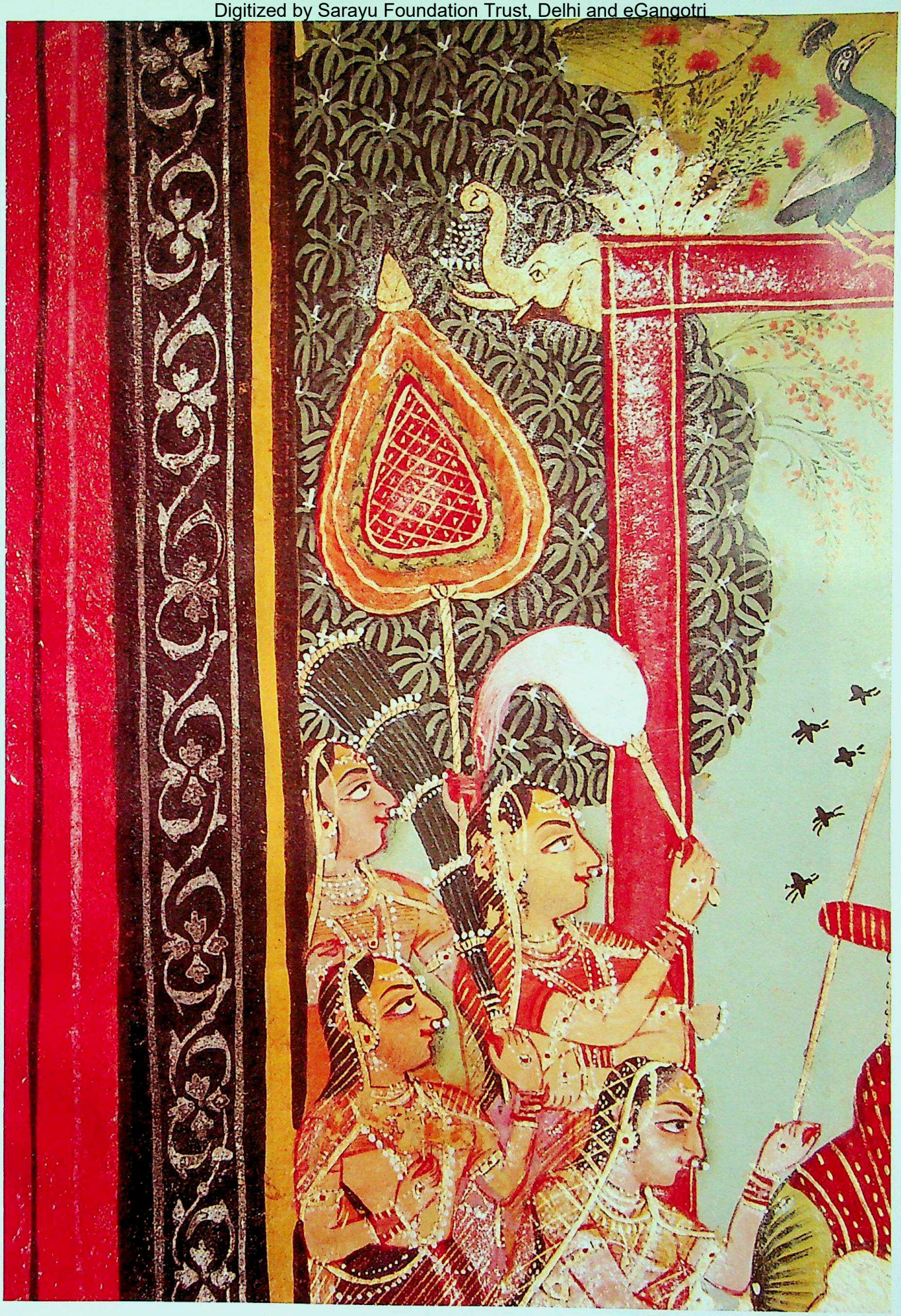

64. Detail of No. 45.

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66. Miniature panel showing Raja Durjanpal of Nagargarh (Madhya Pradesh).

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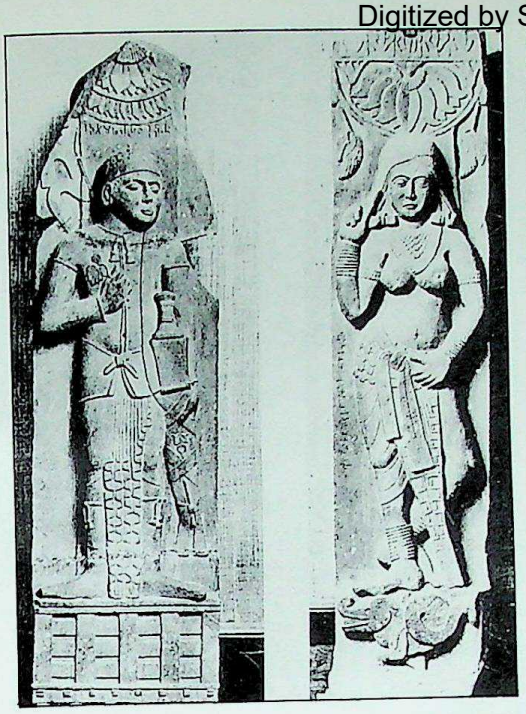
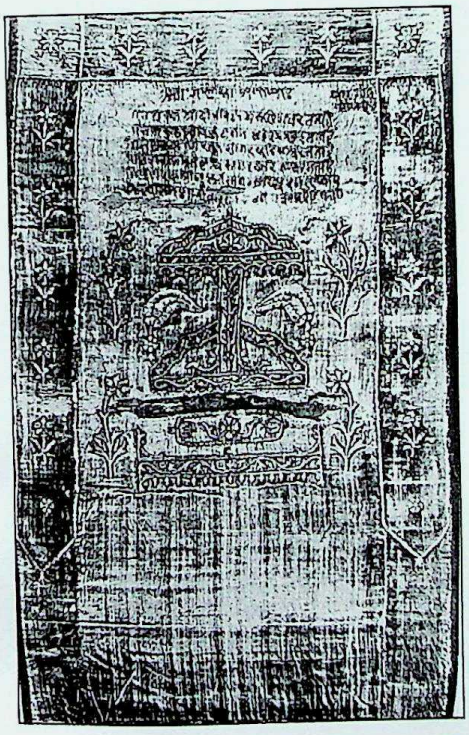


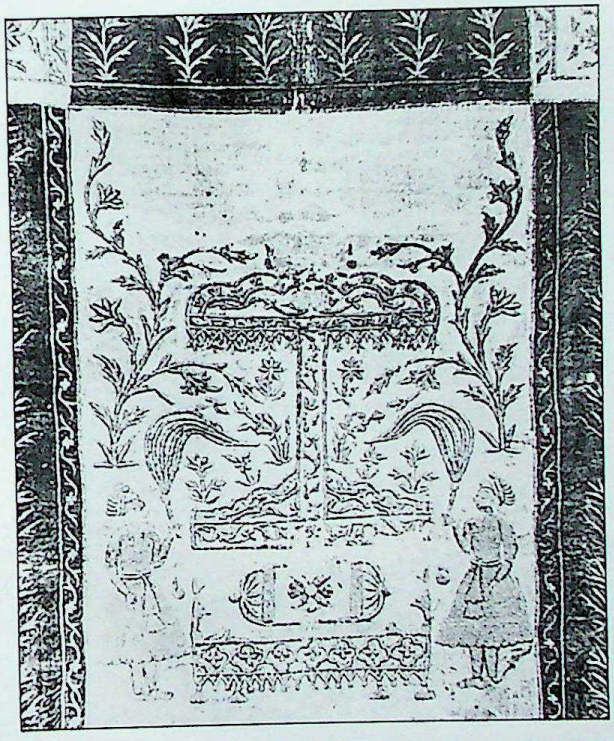
1. Railing pillars, Sandstone, Bharhut Stupa.

6. Portrait of Sultan Hussain Mirza.

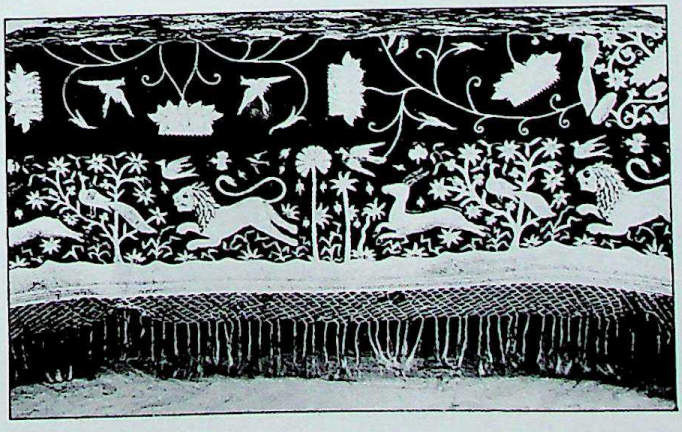
11. *Darbar* hanging.



12. Hanging, *puthia*.



13. Hanging, *puthia*.



41. *Asmangir* from provincial court of Rajasthan.

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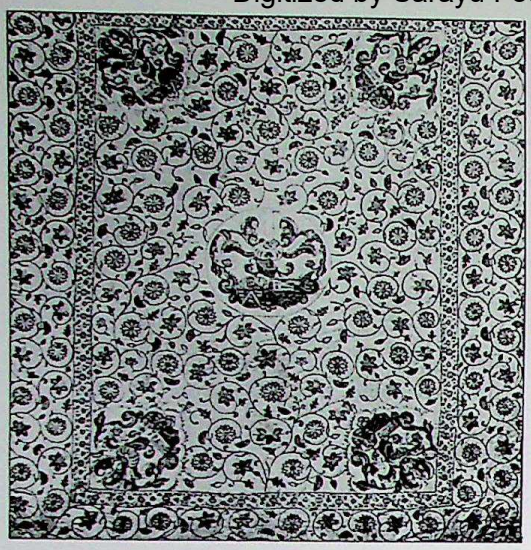
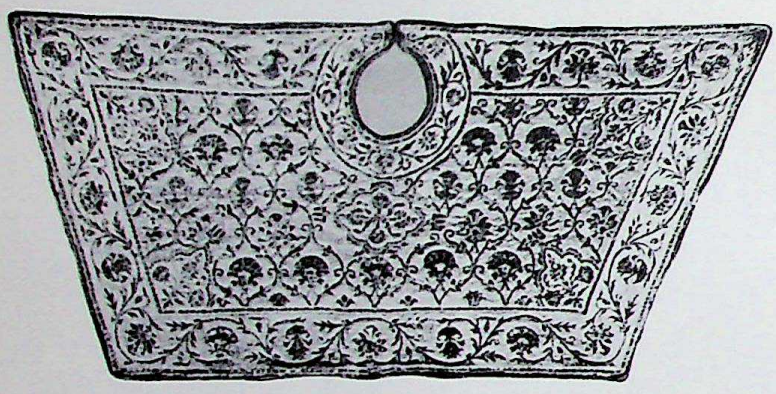
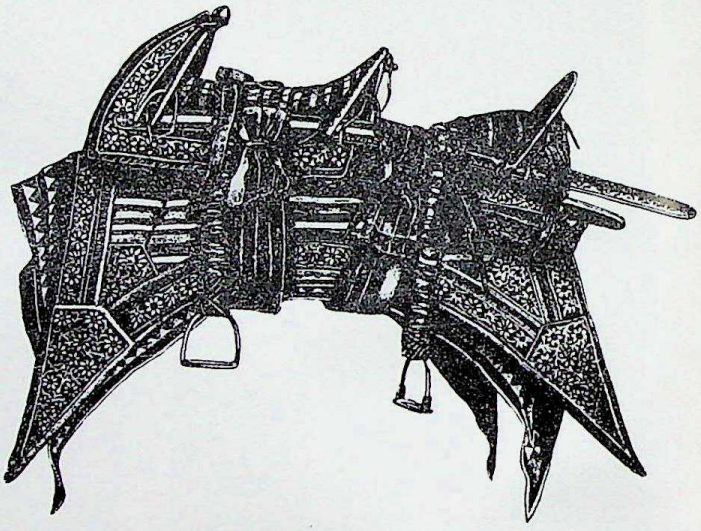


35. Bedspread, silk, embroidered with coloured silk and gold thread.

47. Semi-circular bolster, red velvet, depicting floral creeper design in *vasli* technique.



53. Saddle cotton fabric.



60. Camel saddle from Jodhpur showing gold and silver embroidery.

62. Parasol.

63. *Mehtabgiri* procession fan fixed on a tall wooden handle, brass knobs.

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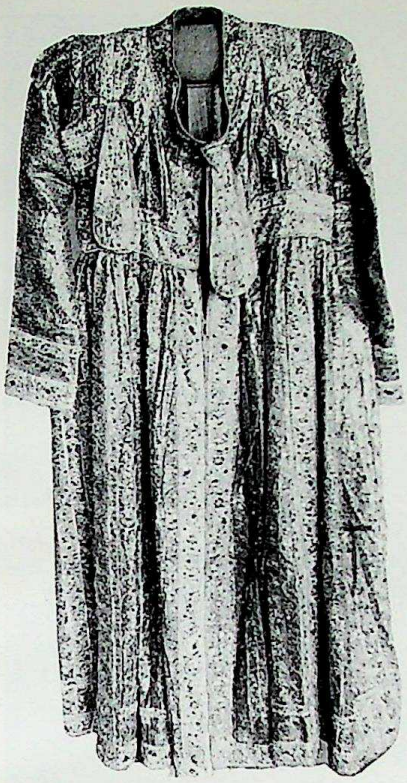
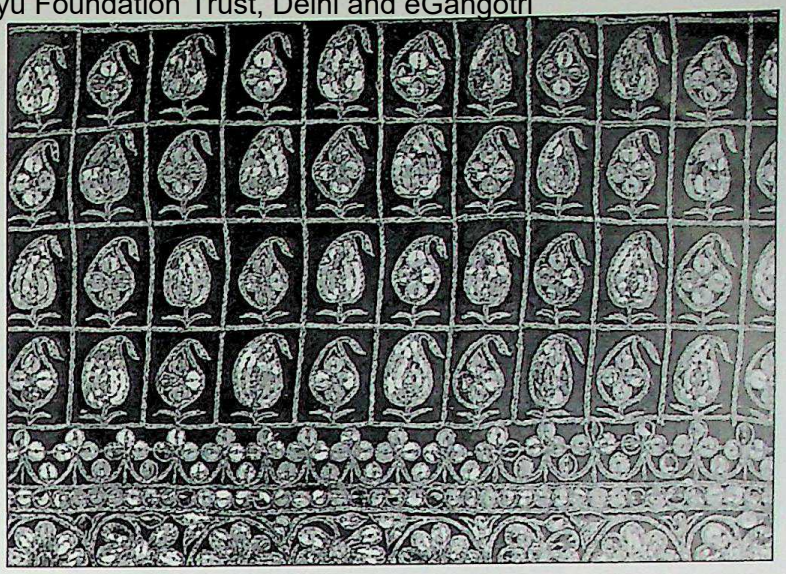
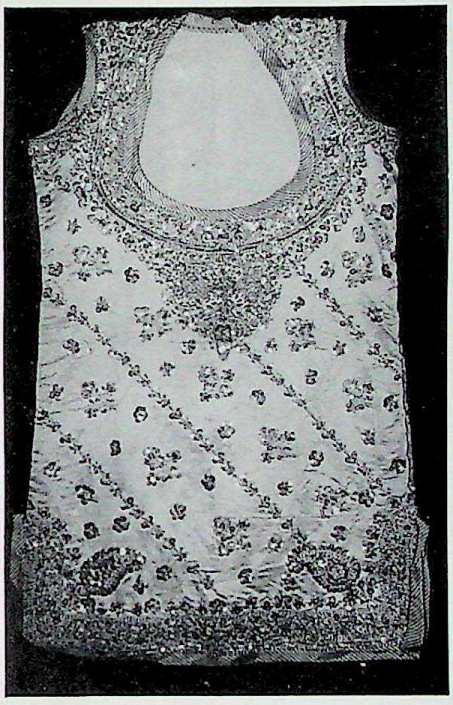


105. *Chaubagla*, man's upper garment.



111. Design detail of No. 110.



113. *Kurtani.*

112. *Lahenga.*

130. Cap showing typical *zardozi* motifs.

131. Back view of the same.

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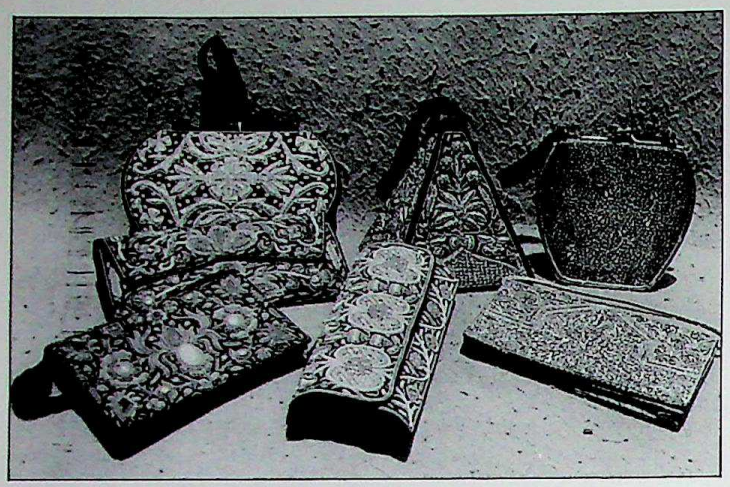
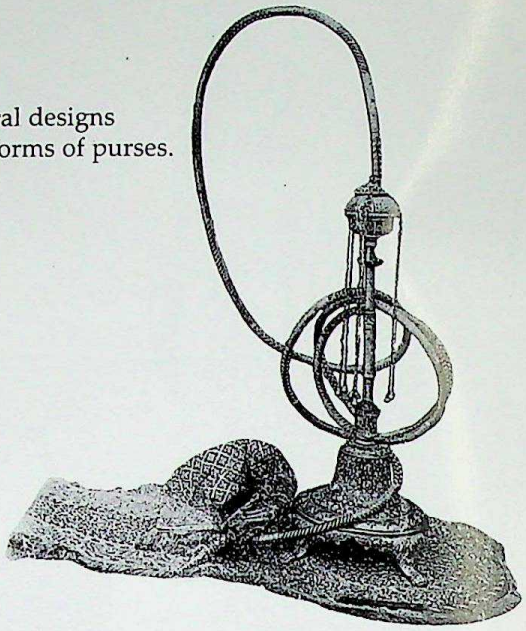
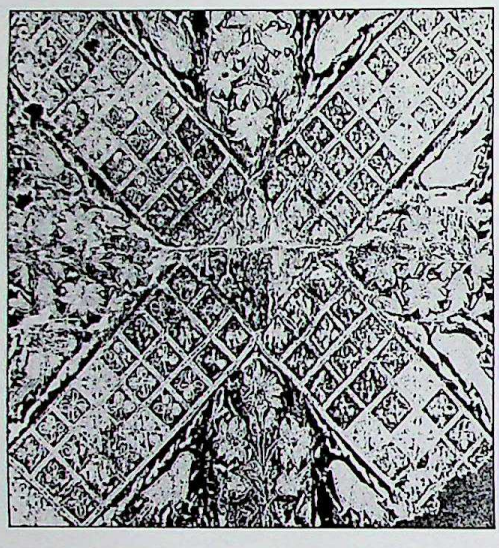


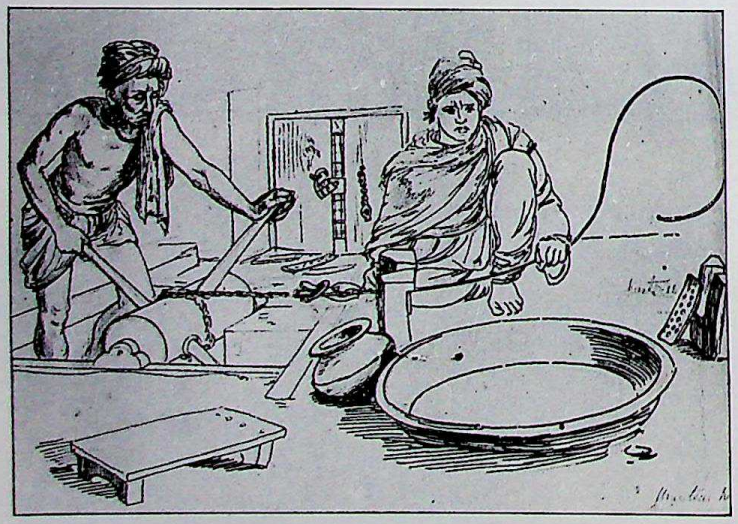
142. Several designs and forms of purses.



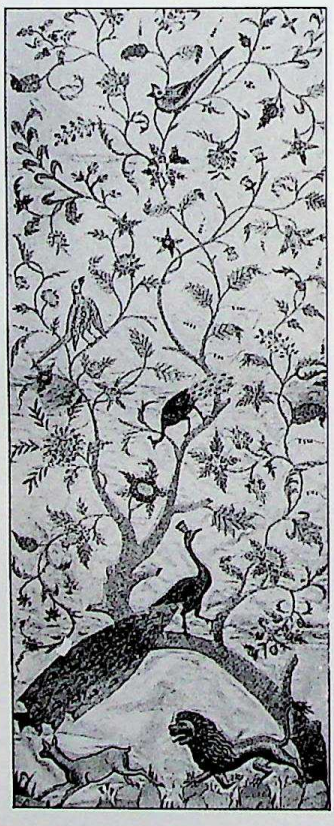
155. *Hukka.*



158. *Bisat* for *chopad,* the spread for playing the popular traditional board game *chopad.*



165. Elaborate process of wire drawing adopted in Punjab.



160. Panel on silk fabric with *meenakari.*

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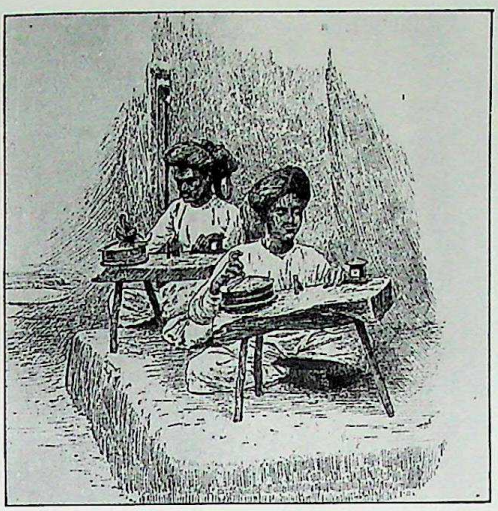
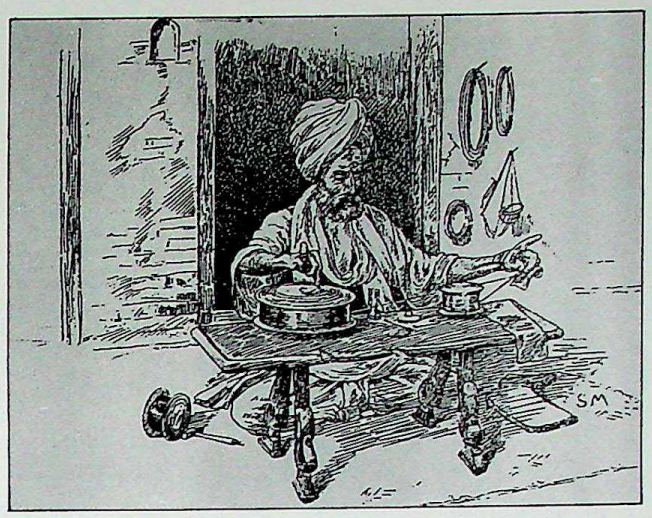
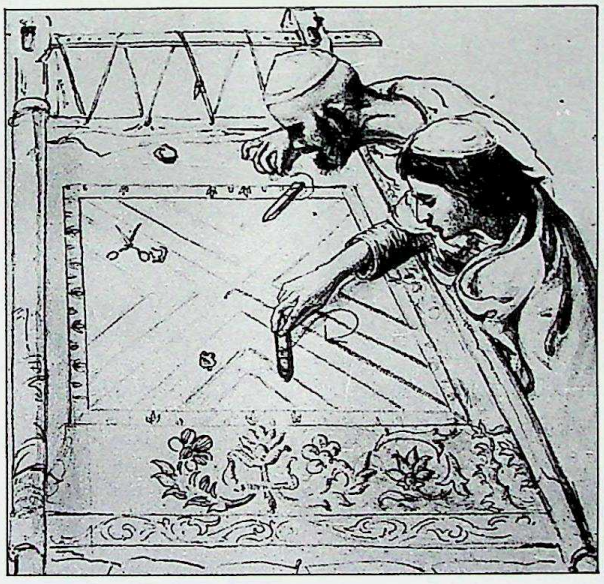


164. Gold wire drawers from Yeola, Uttar Pradesh.



163. Gold wire drawers from Yeola, Uttar Pradesh.

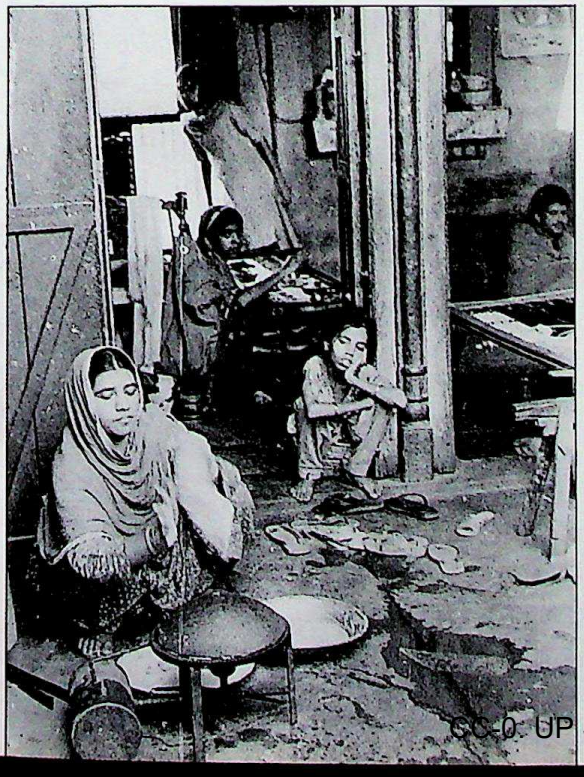


169. *Zardoz* seen working.

170. The *zardoz* using *hath ari*.

182. A *zardoz* woman.

171. Detail of couching technique.



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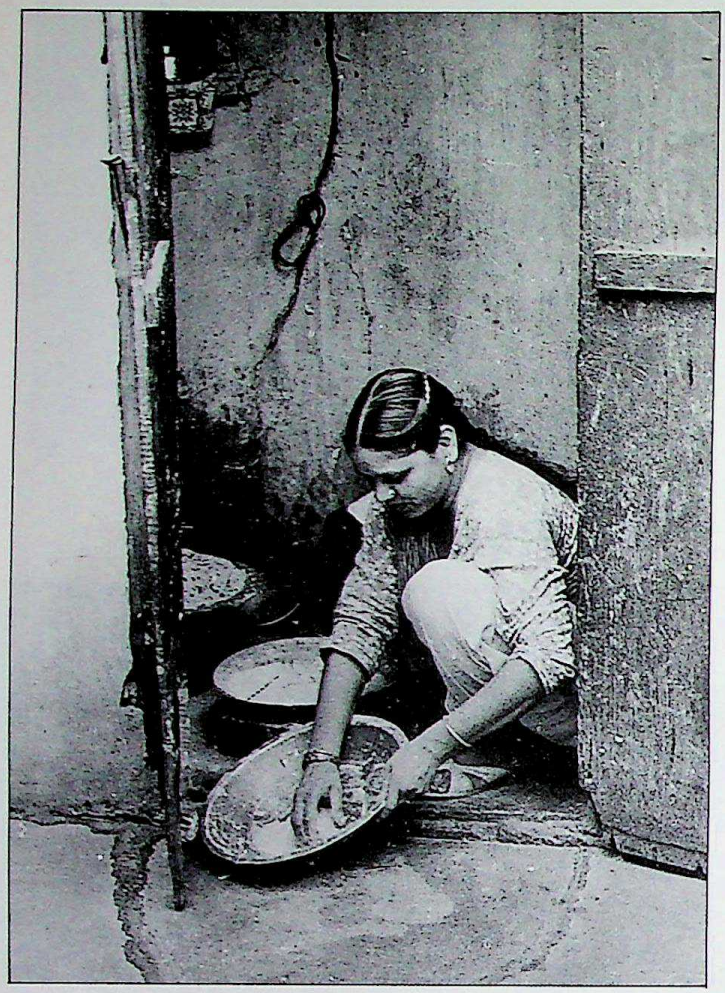
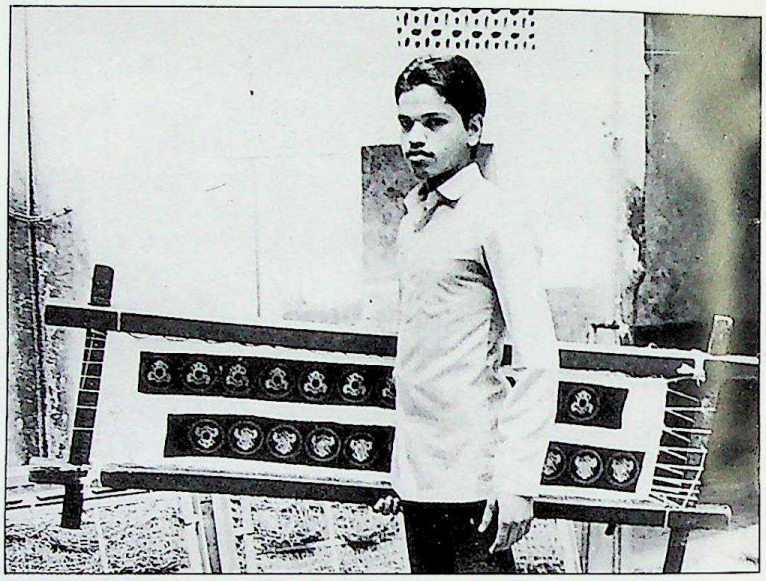
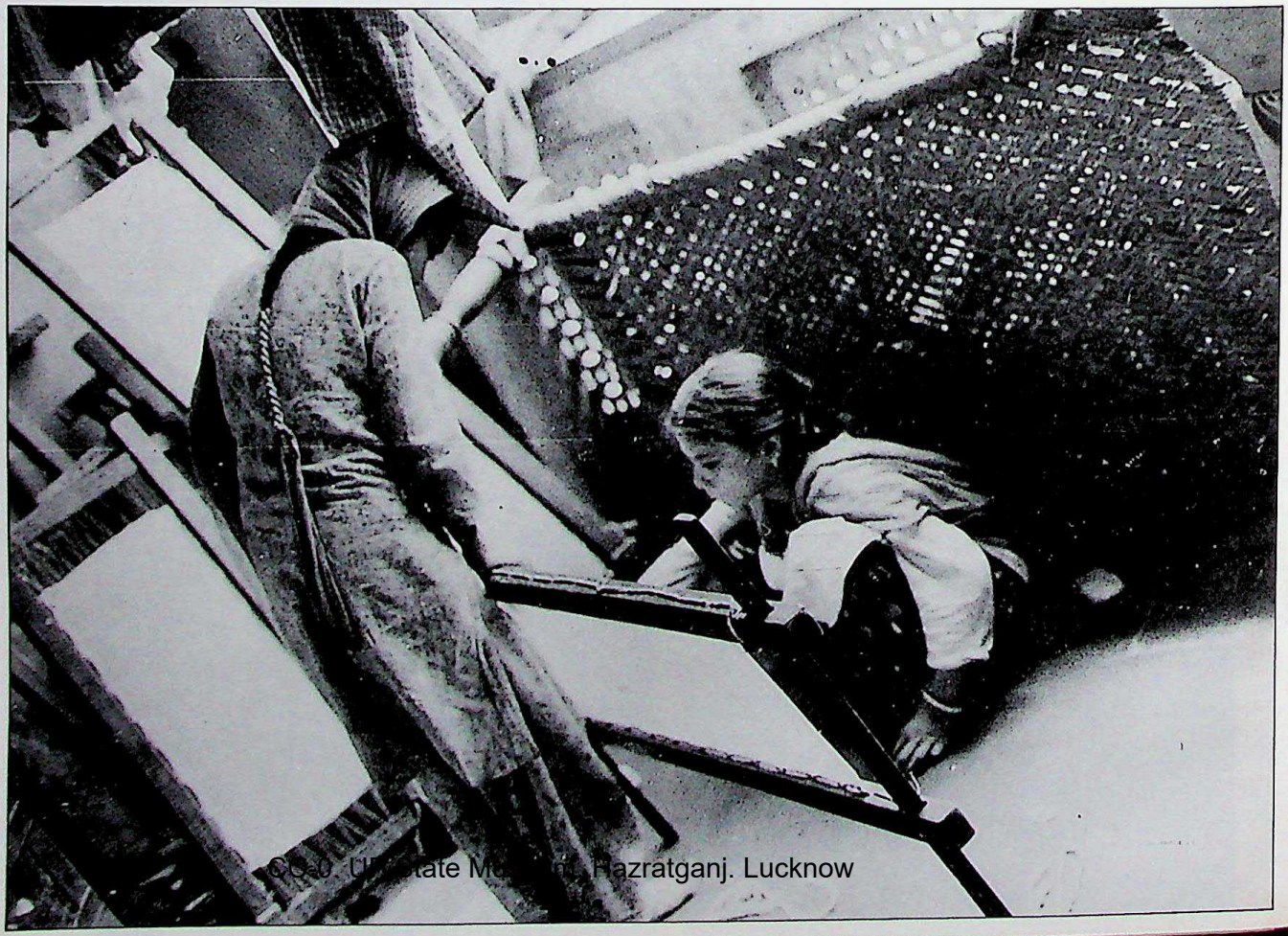


183. Another hearth in the same premises.

184. A child carrying the *karchob* from one household to another.



187. Two girls stitching the cloth on *shamsharak*.



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185. *Zardoz* girl learning basics of the craft.

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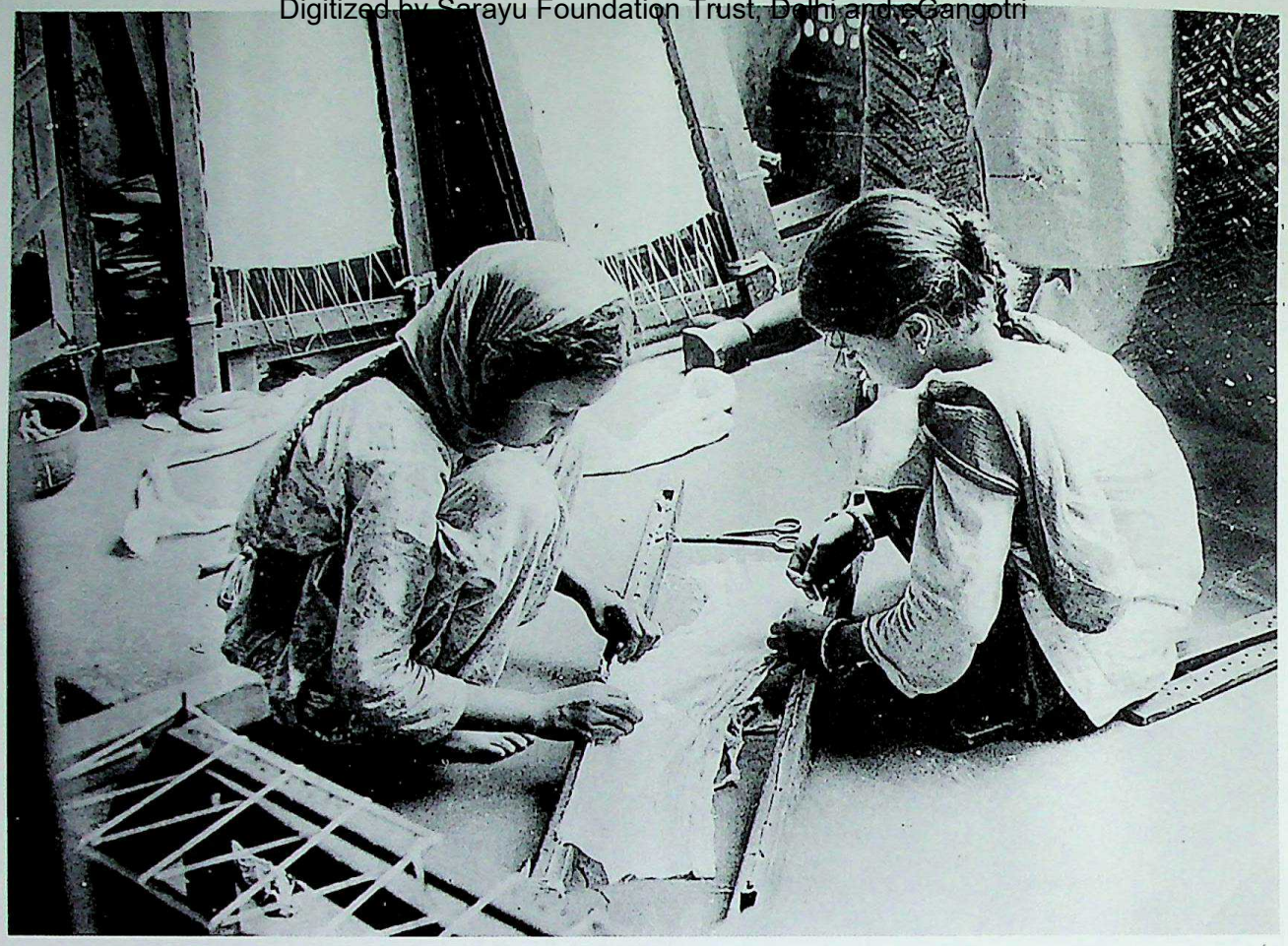

188. *Karchob* fitted with cloth now ready for embroidery.

189. Boys and girls working in domestic *karkhana*.

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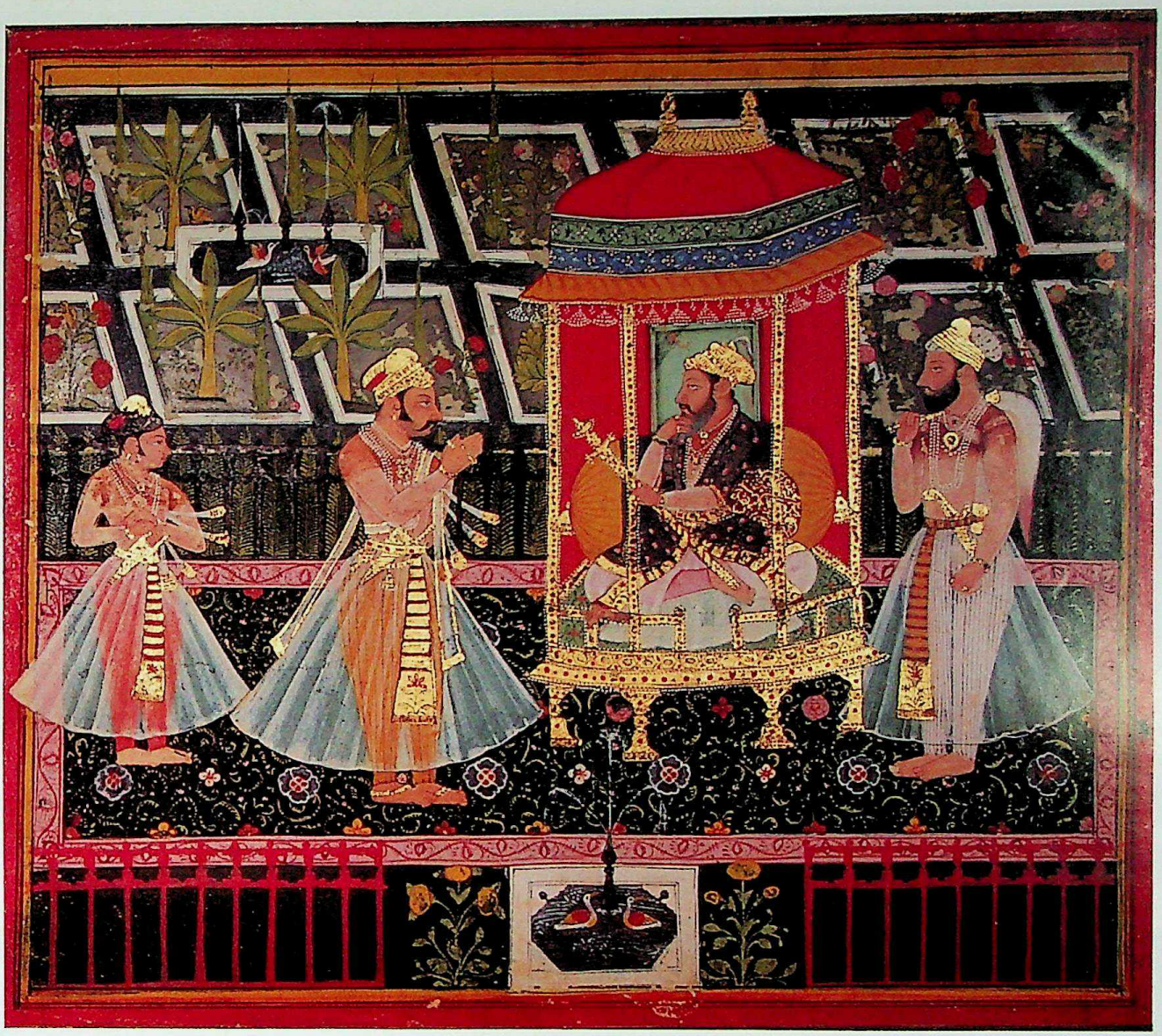

67. Miniature paining showing Bahadur Shah I with Raja Bhav Singh.

68. *Kamarband,* red cotton and *zari* fabric.

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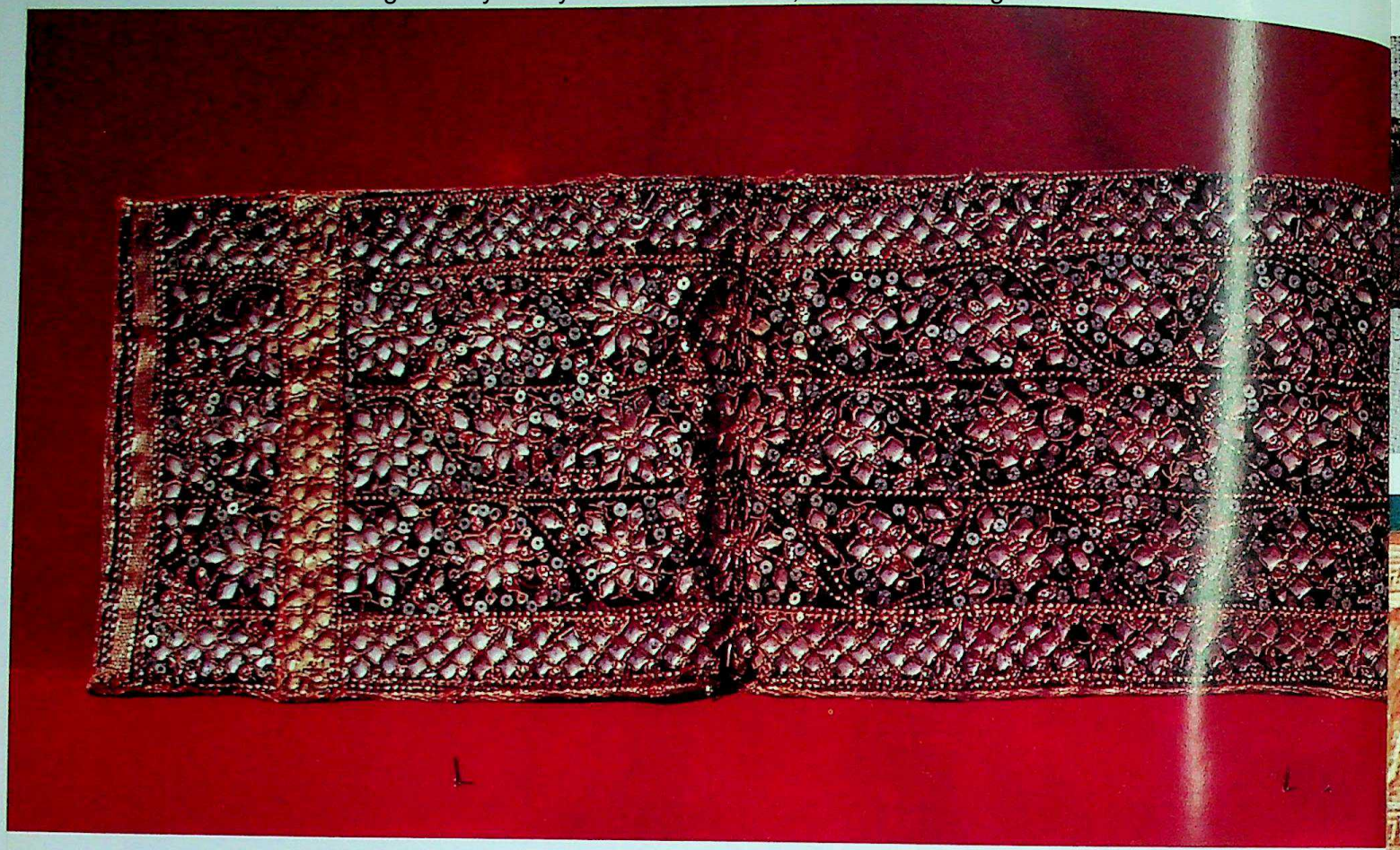
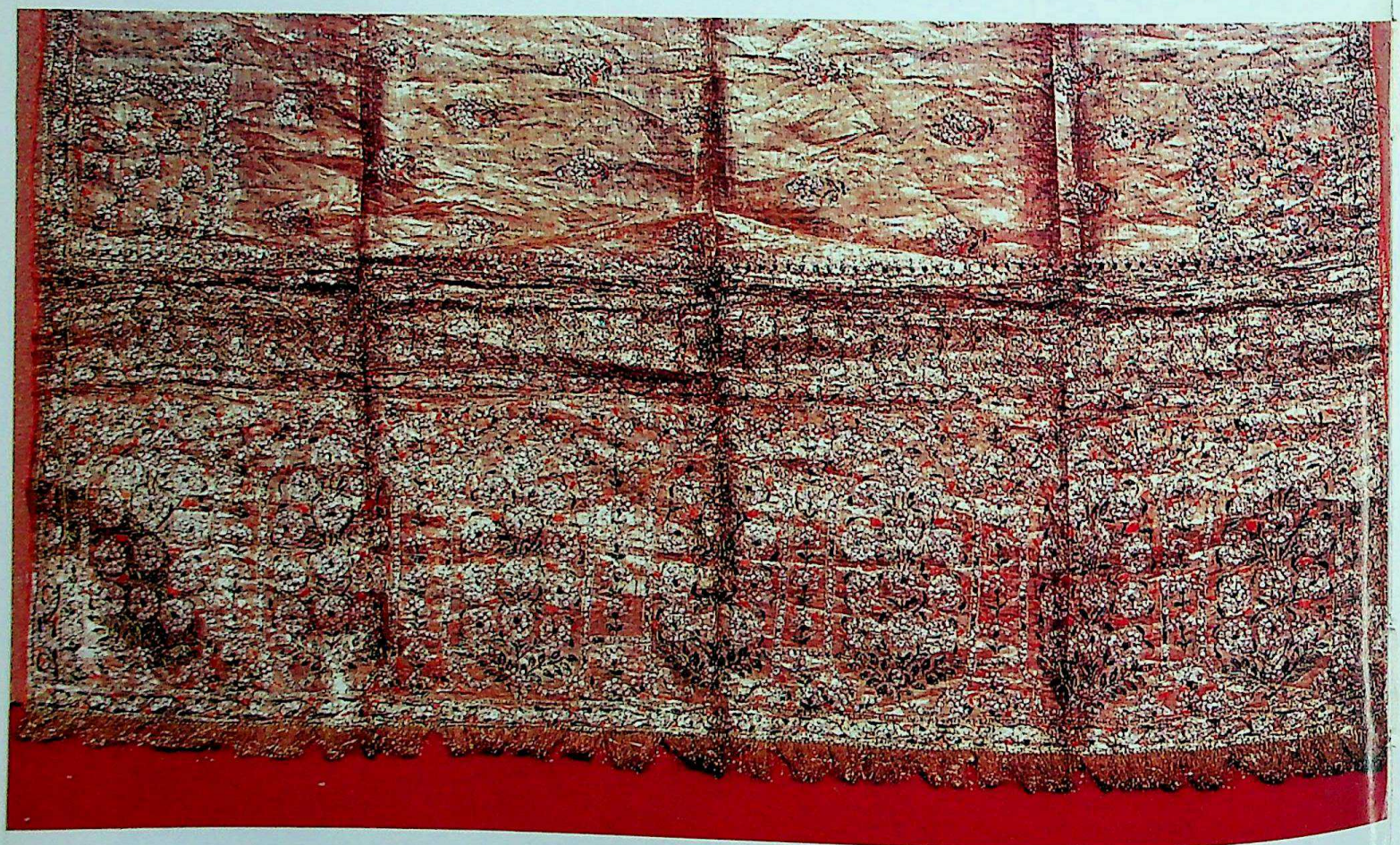


69. *Patka.*

70. Turban.



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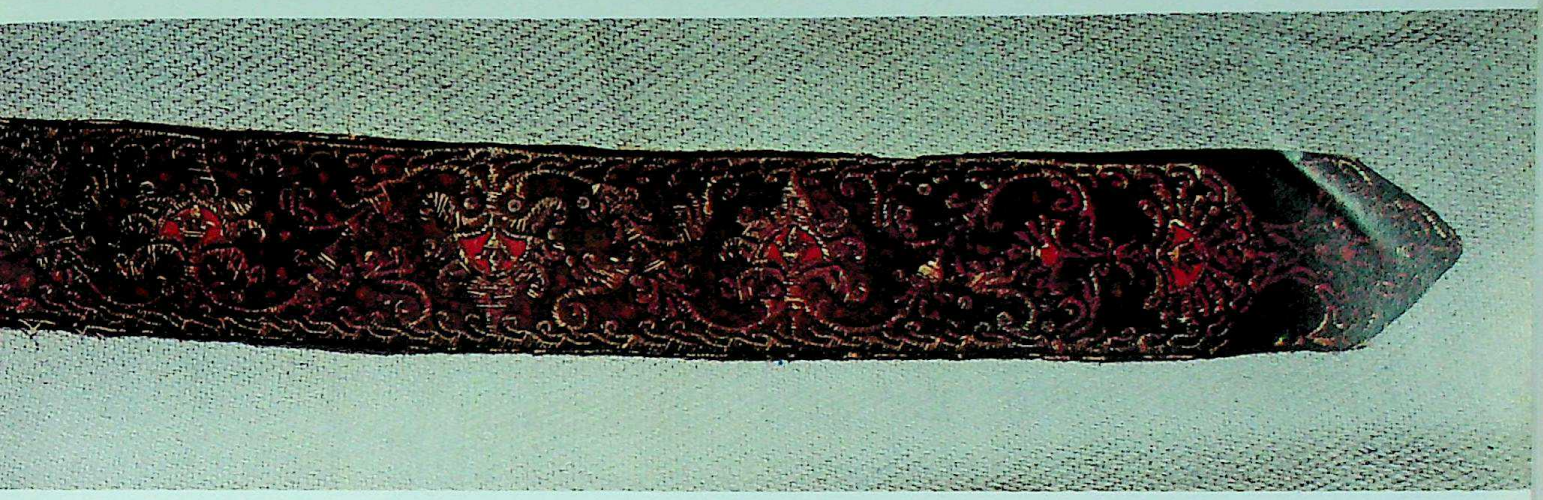
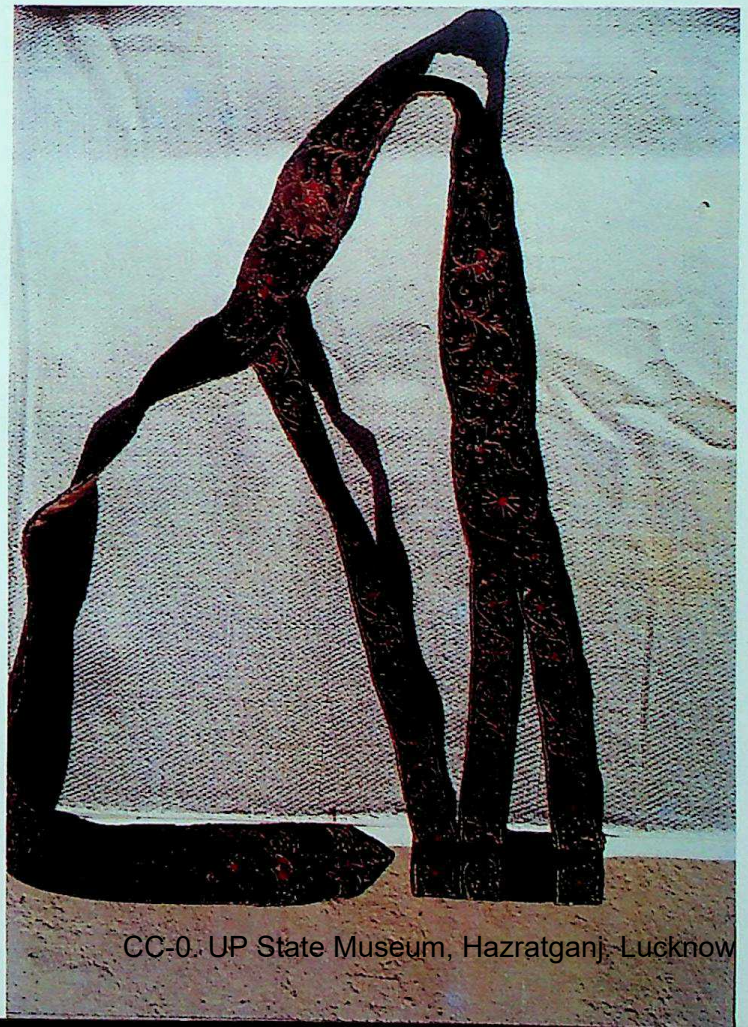


71. *Patka.*
72. Sword cover. →
73. Detail of 72 (above).



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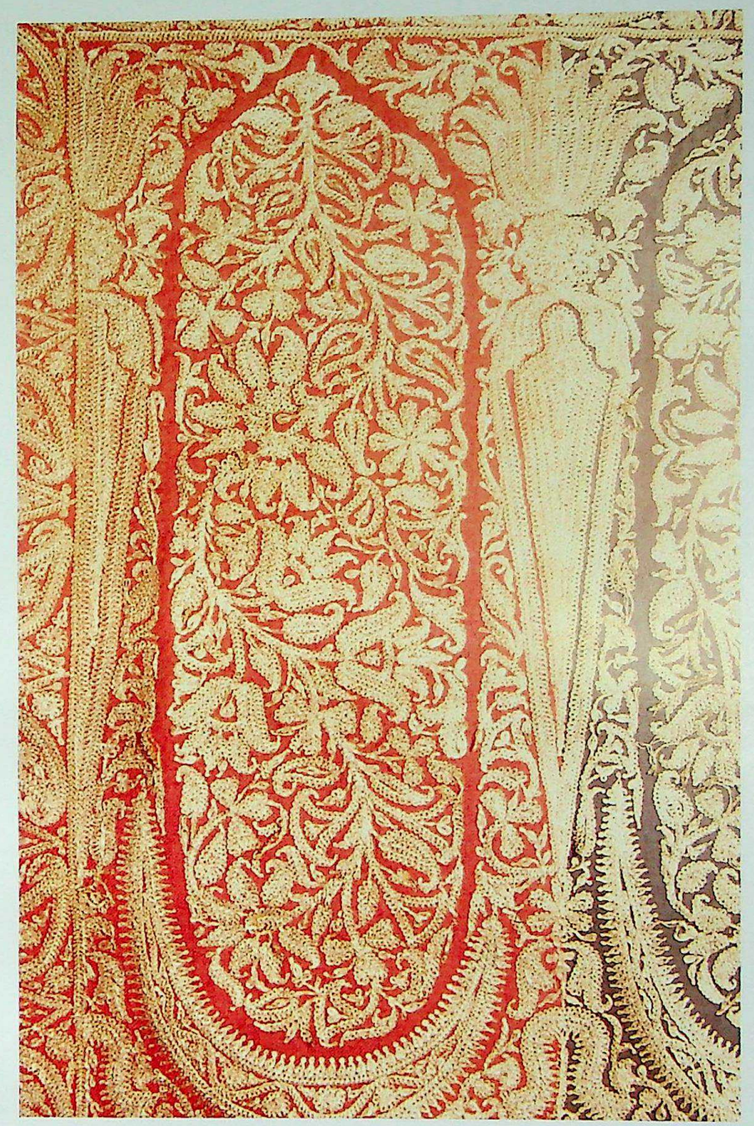
75. Long shawl.



76. Detail of No. 75.

↑ 74. Contemporary fashion accessory, a waist-belt.

← 77. *Doshala,* the body design is conceived in square format.

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78. Detail of end frame of No. 77.

79. Shawl. →

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80. Design detail of the *kairi* motif at No. 79

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Varanasi, Bangalore, Dharmavaram, Kanchipuram, Paithan, West Bengal use gold wire in handloom or powerloom saris. However, yardages of various varieties and combinations of traditional styles are now swamping the handloom sector with floral/geometrical designs in gold wire interspersed with silk/cotton yarn.

New production centres have emerged in the suburbs of Calcutta, which of late have begun to extensively incorporate *zari* in the traditional Bengal handloom industry.

In Mughal India, Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Banaras, Murshidabad, Ahmedabad, Ahmednagar and Burhanpur were renowned for the manufacture of gold, silver and tinsel wires.[11] In fact, all large towns, especially those that were formerly the seats of Muslim governments, had as a rule gold and silver wire drawers. Innumerable forms of drawing, flattening, spinning, plaiting of gold and silver existed even during the Muslim period. Gold, silver and tinsel spangles that were largely used with gold and silver embroideries were called *taras*.

As the process of making real *zari* declined, the role of wire drawers diminished as well and the small workshops of the wire drawers and wire gilders were swept away. Such changes have also led to the disappearance of the skilled wire gilders whose work was described by M.M. Martin. It seems that the localisation of the zari industry emerged as a result of the recession weavers and gold embroiderers faced, following the socio-political and economic changes that India underwent after the demise of the monarchies.

The other raw-materials (Pl. 167) used for *zardozi* are *nalki resham* (silk thread used for stitching the *zari*); *nalki soot ki* (cotton thread used for stitching); *plastic ka taga* (polyester yarn); *kachcha resham* (floss silk); *markins* (fabric cotton used for lining); *bukram* (stiff cotton fabric used for giving a raised effect); *soot ki dori* (thick cotton thread).

The fabric materials on which *zardozi* was done during the Mughal period included *mashru*, silk, *muslin*, velvet brocade, *bafta, amru, ghatta* or *satinette*-like velvet.[12] Satinette were used for furnishing, while others for costumes etc. During the late Mughal period some new materials such as net, tissue and georgette became popular. The choice of these materials reflected strong influence of the Europeans, who had already come to the country during the 16th/17th century. Contemporarily the synthetic fabric is the choice of many users. These variegated forms of base fabric reflect the adaptable nature of the zardoz, who accommodate themselves to the changed requirement for the survival of their craft.

Very few tools are required for the metal embroidery. As a matter of fact *zardoz* use only the basic tools and so very little change can be noticed in these since the Mughal period. Despite the fact that some major changes occurred in the varieties of raw materials, the continuity of the tradition is distinctly visible in the tools, which form an important part of the technology. *Zardozi* is also known as *karchobi*, which means framework (Pl. 167).

The name itself distinguishes this craft from the other needle crafts, implying that the work is essentially done on a *karchob* i.e. the frame which is

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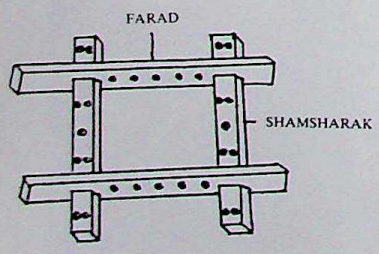
the main tool. The frame has four wooden arms cut to sizes, made of any of the hard woods like *shisham, shatir* etc. The frame may be called a slight variation of the Indian *charpai.* The two vertical beams of the *karchob* are called *farad. Farad* is used for rolling the cloth if need arises, but *shamsharak,* which are two horizontal bars, are used only for stretching the cloth, just like a *charpai.* The strings can be tightened. The length of *shamsharak* does not exceed two metres and the normal size of *shamsharak* varies from 75 cms to 150 cms. The size of *farad* varies from 1/2 metre to 6 metres. Noteworthy are the unequal sizes and thickness of *farad* and *shamsharak.* This is because of the specific needs of the craftsmen arising in two different situations. First at the time of embroidering, the craftspersons sit on either side of the *karchob,* and simultaneously work on different sections of the design. Since the weight of the arms of the craftspersons constantly falls on *farad,* this needs to be stronger. Secondly, as the cloth which is to be embroidered can never be smaller than a *farad,* the craftspersons choose the *farad* according to the length of the cloth. Previously, when large items like *asmangir* were worked the length of *farad* and *shamsharak* was increased accordingly.

Karchob is placed on two stands having two legs fixed on the horizontal bars at an angle. The stand is called *tipai* and its size remains the same invariably. The *farad, shamsharak* and *tipai* are the accessories of *karchob* and they are also separable. After a day's work, *karchob* is placed vertically against the wall with an unfinished piece fixed on it. The stand is never fitted on to the frame. This facilitates the use of space for other chores after the day's work and also helps in carrying *karchob* from one place to another (Pl. 168). *Karchob* is also called *adda.*

Apart from the *karchob,* the other tools and equipments required for the work are: scissors of small size, needles of various thicknesses, *fatila, ari,* and hammer and dabber.

Scissors and needles are the common tools used in any type of embroidery work; traditionally in place of scissors, the craftsmen used a piece of glass or chinaware to cut the threads. *Fatila* is a small wooden tool used for wrapping *tilla* on it for embroidery. *Ari* is a small crochet-hook-like needle, with a fine notch on one edge, and the other edge fixed into a wooden handle for smooth functioning. It is used for *hath ari* work, which is closely associated with *zardozi.* Hammer and dabber are other wooden tools, made of *shisham* and sagon wood, which are used to beat the embroidery portion. The dabber is put under the surface for support; and the hammer gives light strokes on the upper surface. By this light beating with the hammer the embroidery gives lustrous look.



Process of the Craft

First of all the design is traced on paper by a pencil and small holes are punched on it at close intervals. The pin pricked design on the paper is placed on the piece to be embroidered and smeared with zinc powder soaked in the water. The zinc solution passes through the holes making the impression on the cloth. The other powders used for tracing of designs are *khadiya, neel* (indigo),

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gum depending on the colour of the cloth to be embroidered. When the tracing is worn out after prolonged use, the copies are made by repunching the tracing on two or three papers for reuse. Traditionally during the Mughal period, *nakkash*, the professional artists, used to draw the design in the court *karkhana*[13] where several crafts were carried on simultaneously. However, during the field-work, it was observed that these days *zardoz* draw their drawings themselves. These drawings are called *khakhas* generally drawn by good artists among *zardoz*, who provide the copies to their fellowmen. Normally the *khakhas* are stored for about 30 to 40 years. In commercial *karkhanas*, the *karkhanedars* keep a control on the designs.

Next process involves laying of different varieties and shapes of metallic wire and other materials like glass, beads etc. This is done by passing the needle which is threaded from underneath the fabric to the surface and then from surface to below. The needle thus moves upward from the wrong side. The *zari* wires cut into small pieces are laid so closely that they appear to be continuous thread even to a trained eye. However, the *tilla* is not cut in small pieces. It is instead wrapped around a *fatila* which is moved from one side to the other with the motion of needle.

A distinction of technique exists in the *ari* work, where instead of small pieces of pure metallic wire only *kalabattu* is used. Unlike the needle the *ari* is held in hand and passed beneath from the right side of the fabric. The gilded wire or *tilla* is wrapped on *fatila* and a portion is pulled above by keeping it in the notch of the *ari* (Pl. 169).

It was asserted by *zardoz* during the course of interviews that *ari* work on *karchob* is comparatively a later assimilation in *zardozi* work and is derived from the *mochi bharat* of Gujarat where a similar needle is used for embroidering leather shoes with cotton thread. This technique is preponderantly employed for embroidering leather shoes in Punjab, Rajasthan also. On the fabric, however, these days it is a trend to employ *zardozi* and *ari* technique in close togetherness. Since *ari* work is faster, it is assimilated with *zardozi* stitches. It may be mentioned in this connection that *ansari zardoz* are very particular about not practising *ari* technique. Many among them were found saying that *bhookhe mar jayenge par ari nahin uthayenge* (we may die of hunger but shall not work with needle). That is why, perhaps, *tilla* is also stitched with the needle in domestic *karkhanas*. The *hath ari* work was abundantly done on woollen items in the provincial courts of Punjab, Kashmir and Patiala (Pl. 170).

Zardozi work also however has two distinct categories known as *karchobi* and *kamdani*. The embroidery done on velvet or heavy satin generally for tent coverages, furnishings etc. traditionally with *badla* was called *karchobi*. It is said to have become popular during the late Mughal period, when the Muslims came in contact with Portuguese. Presently, the shashe of the Pope in Catholic church are worked in this technique. *Kamdani* generally refers to the work done on muslin, silk and other fabrics. The work here is done with great deal of minute skill in delicate rhythm. This technique remained more popular on the dresses, coverlets, caps and many miscellaneous items.

An important technique, which requires to be discussed is couching (Pl. 171). As the name implies it is the technique employed to give the embossed

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effect at the desired portions. Normally such effect is obtained by two processes. In the first process a cotton fabric is tied on *karchob* and the outline of the design is traced on its surface. Pieces of cardboard or *bukram* are then pasted on the portions where raised effect is desired. Next the fabric on which the work is to be done is stitched on the *karchob* and embroidered. The technique also known as *vasli kam* (Pl. 172) was more popular on furnishing materials, trappings etc. Presently it is practised on badges, insignias etc. In the second procedure of couching, the fabric which is to be embroidered is directly stretched on *karchob* and the area desired to be couched is filled with thick cotton yarn stitches. Sometimes a piece of foam is put underneath. Once the desired embossed effect is obtained, the area is covered with *zari* wire. This technique is practised on covers, costumes etc.

Minakari is another important process where the variety of silk threads along with *zari* wire are used for embellishment. This technique lends enamel-like view to embroidery, hence the name *minakari* (Pls. 173-178).

It is interesting to note that despite many changes in design, form etc., the tools and technology of the craft have remained more or less unchanged. There is thus a continuity in the process, tools and equipment since the inception of the craft during Mughal period.

The process of *zardozi* revolves around five basic designs which have larger variation. These basic designs are *jali* (geometric design) (Line-drawings 56-70), *bharat* (filler design) (Line-drawings 71-76), *patti* (leaf), *phul* (flower), *pankhi* (bird), *janwar* (animal).

Jali work is also known as *tanke bandi ka kam* because here the stitches are counted without a preconceived draft. Few of the *jali* designs are: *chandi ki jali, chakle wali jali, suiyo wali jali. Bharat* designs as the name indicates fill the portions by embroidery. These have mainly the geometrical patterns which are placed in the gaps in a continuous rhythm (Pls. 179-181).

Popular *bharat* designs are: *chunti ki bharat, tanke bandi ka kam, do suiyo ki bharat, khardar bharat.* Other designs like *patti, phul, pankhi* and *janwar* have a wider range. Important are *gende ka phul* (kidney-shaped flower), *ek khar, ded khar, teen khar* (refer to the respective edges generally of leaves), *angur* (grape) etc. (Line-drawings 1-55).

Zardozi as a technique is understood to be a distinctive style of stitching as it differs from other traditions of embroidery like *kantha, kasuti, phulkari* etc. where the movement of the threaded needle is guided by a variety of stitches. In other embroideries silk, cotton or woollen threads are used, which are pliable enough to move freely. However, in *zardozi,* the thread only acts as a binding medium, whereas the body of the design is completed by laying varieties of metallic threads in several shapes and forms along with beads, stones, beetle wings etc. The whole process is more indicative of applique rather than embroidery. Thus it may be called metal applique. This is further corroborated by the fact that *zardoz* always get payments for amount of wire stitched on the cloth by weight. They never use the word *kadai,* the *Hindi* word for embroidery, instead refer to it as *salme sitare ke kam ka takna* which means laying of the *salma, sitara* on the body of the fabric.

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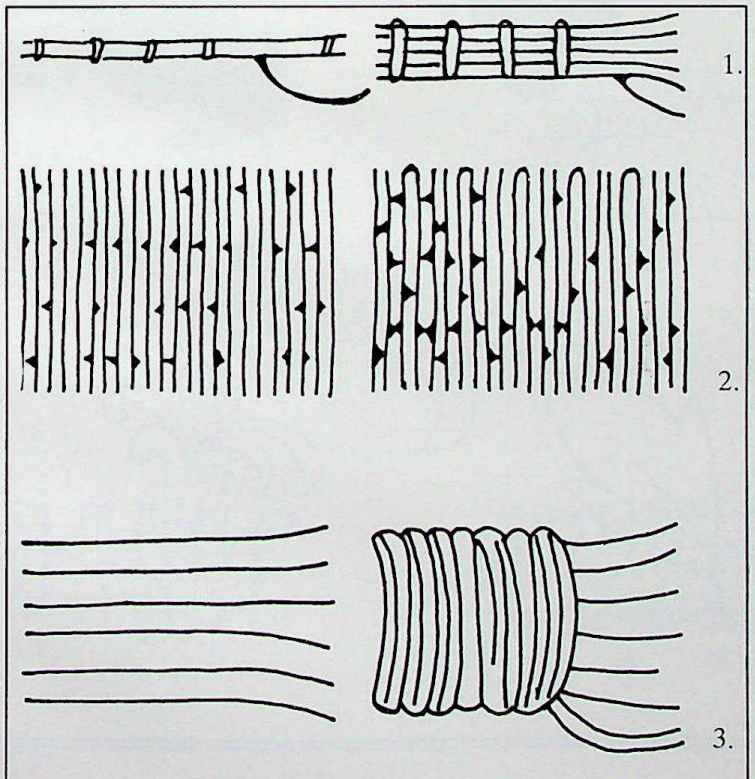
Footnotes

1. (a) Gupta, B.A., 1888, Embroidery, Journal of Indian Art, Vol. II, No. 18, p. 12; Watt, George, 1903, Indian Art at Delhi: Official Catalogue of the Delhi Exhibition, p. 417;
   (b) Digby Wyatt, The Industrial Arts of Nineteenth Century, p. 31; Kipling, J.J., 1988, Industries of Punjab, p. 30.
2. Gupta, B.A., 1888, Embroidery, p. 12.
3. Digby Wyatt, The Industrial Arts of Nineteenth Century, p. 31.
4. Watt, George, 1903, p. 417.
5. Hunter writes that the gold and silver thread is made by being drawn out under the application of heat. The operation is performed with such nicety that 1 rupee's worth of silver will make a thread nearly 800 yards long.
6. Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1886, Vol. 6, p. 602; IGI Provincial Series, Bombay Presidency, 1909, p. 67; Mukherji, T.N., 1888, Art Manufacture of India, p. 368; IGI, 76, 96; IGI, ii-75, 85; IGI, iii-59, 272; IGI, iv-62, 86; IGI, v-157, 252; IGI, vii 89, 107, 211, 239, 430.
7. Sir Watt has referred to this as 'rasi', 1903-118.
8. The details are also outlined in Census of India, 1961, VII-A, Zari Embroidery and Batua making of Bhopal, Surat Jari Industry, 1981-0-4-5.
9. Journal of Persian Art.
10. Hunter, 1886, IGI, pp. 602-603.
11. Birdwood, G., 1880, The Industrial Arts of India, pp. 278-80.
12. Watt, George, 1903, pp. 297-299, 319. These are discussed at length by Sir George Watt.
13. Gupta, B.A., 1888, p. 11.



1. Outlines in single or group of threads.
2. Fillings done by laying threads side by side or patterned on the ground and concluding them with plain stitches.
3. Raised effect obtained with a foundation padding in soft thick cotton thread or card board.

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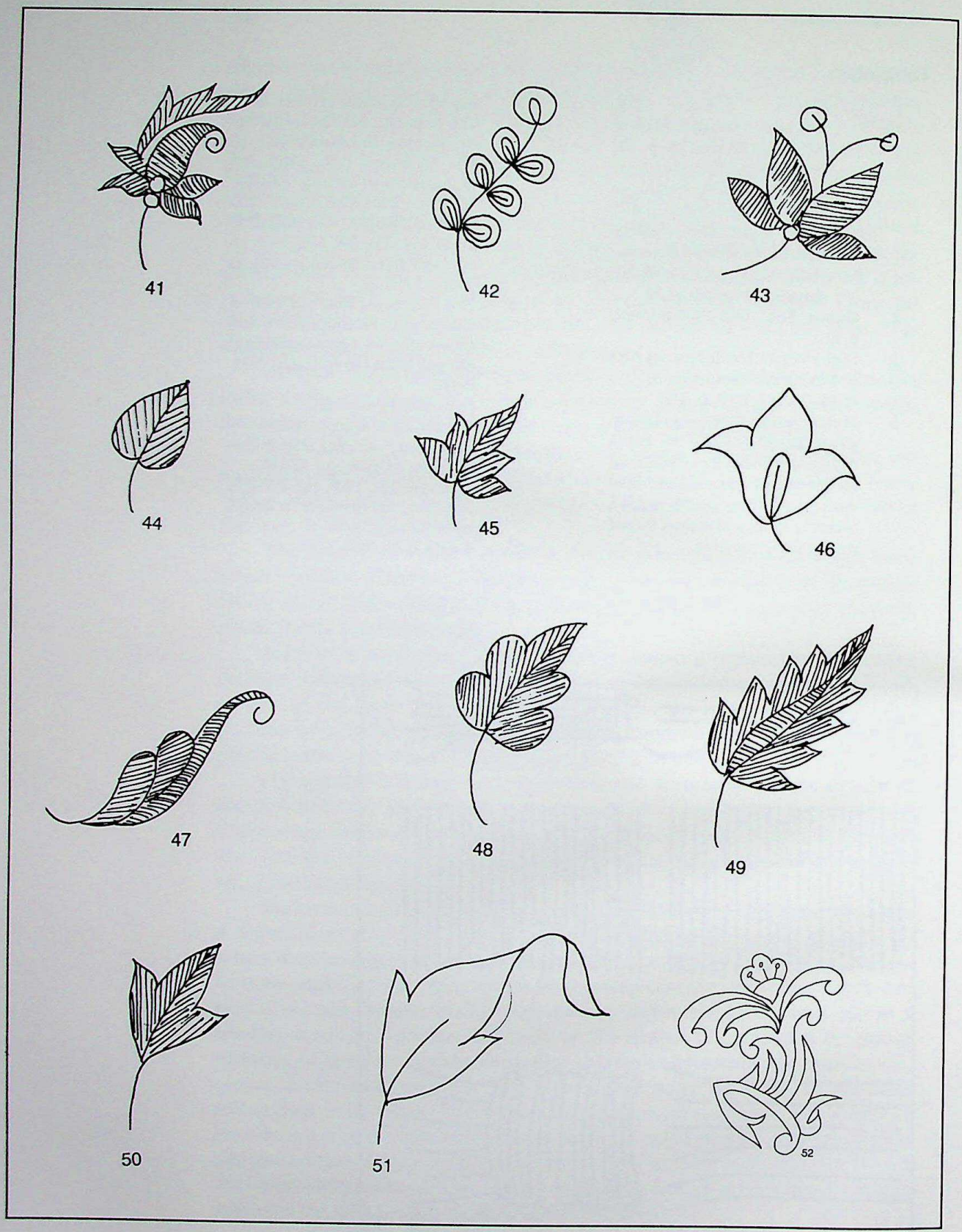

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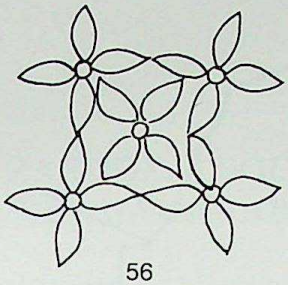

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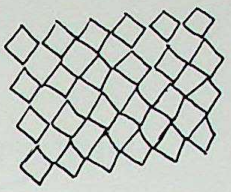

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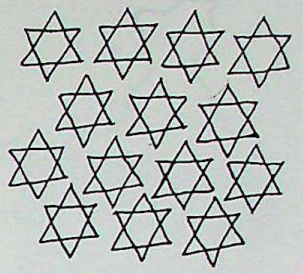

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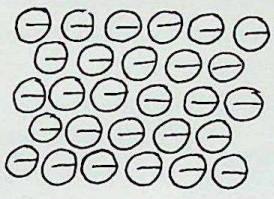

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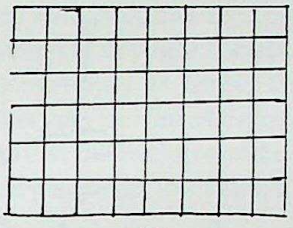

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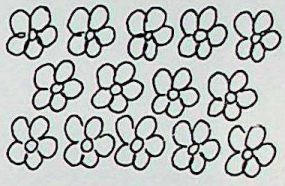

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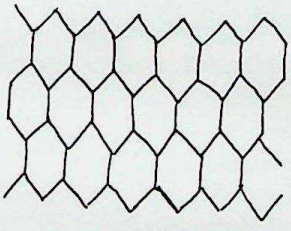

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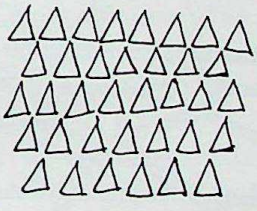

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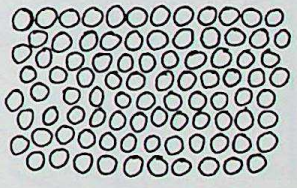

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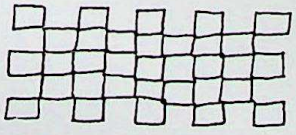

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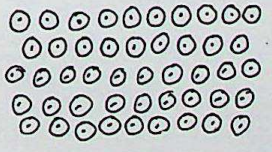

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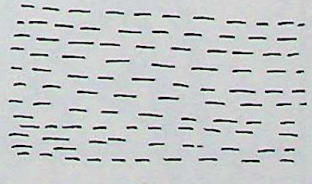

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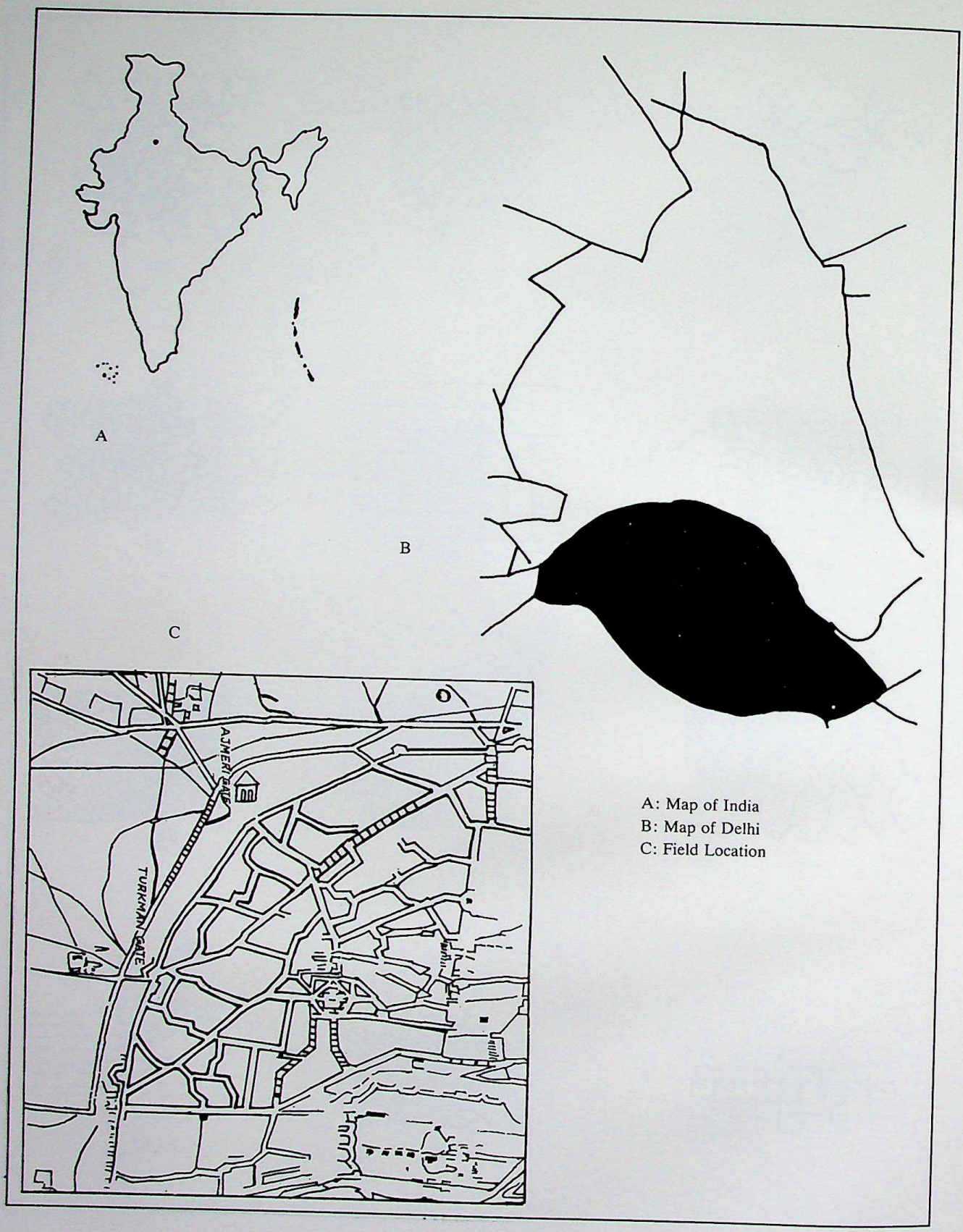

A: Map of India
B: Map of Delhi
C: Field Location

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ZARDOZ: A SOCIAL RETROSPECT IN SHAHJAHANABAD

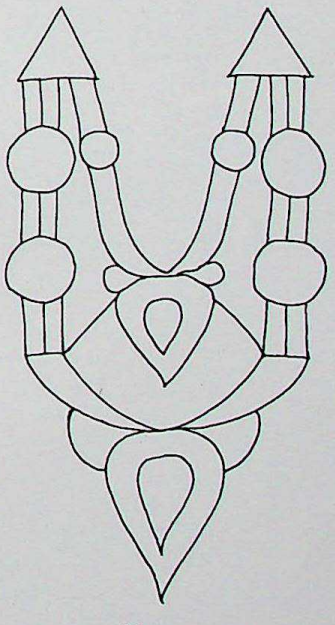
Historical vicissitudes and major turbulence in the technological environment are the prominent revolutions which pose challenges to the social system of the craftspersons and their skills. Zardozi craft witnessed changed patronisation at several political interceptions, which invariably brought social changes in the working environment of the zardoz community at large, this had direct reflections on their social organization. It is very pertinent therefore to discuss the contemporary social organization against the background of the information gathered for a span of about a century through interviews, observations and questionnaires.[1]

The observations made in this chapter and the analysis thereof are entirely based upon the field-work. The main field locations covered are Chitli Qubar, Jama Masjid, Turkman Gate, Sui Walan, Kalan Mahal, Pahari Bhojla, Lal Kuan areas of walled city i.e. Shahjahanabad.[2] The observations concentrated on the havelis, where a large number of joint and nuclear households reside.

Zardoz belong to the '*Sunni*' sect of Islamic religion.[3] The community recognized on the common craft identity is broadly divisible in two groups, each operating the craft through varied system of production organization and having distinct socio-cultural norms.

The first group belongs to the Ansari[4] sub-division of the broader category *Sheikh* who are weavers by profession, while the second hails from *Sheikh* and *Pathan* castes.[5] For the brevity of discussion we have evolved a nomenclature for these two groups. Members of the first group i.e. the *Ansari zardoz* have been called '*Domestic Karkhanedars*' as they have their production organization at their own residential quarters. However at times they also work under commercial *karkhanedars* on wages. As the production organizations of the *Sheikh/Saiyid/Pathan zardoz* are located away from their residential quarters, they are called '*Commercial karkhanedars*'.

Although these two groups have common occupational identity in terms of the craft, their social and kinship relationships are not tied together. The discussion and the analysis in the following pages highlight social behaviour of the members of *zardoz* community in relation to the craft as well as wider society. The majority of the craftspersons studied in purview of monograph belong to the first category. The second category consists only of a few rich members of the community who are the owners of the commercial *karkhanas*.[6]



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Ansari Zardoz

The zardoz community falling under this division, as it exists today, can be conceived in terms of a three-tiered social organization:

(a) The 'core group' comprises of the craftspersons, where every member of the family is a practising *zardoz*. The craftspersons here follow the domestic mode of production for earning a livelihood from this craft alone.

(b) The 'intermediary group' where some members of the family are engaged in this craft, but others have adopted different professions for their livelihood. The 'intermediary group' emerges because of the unnatural situations arising in the family. Here we find only women and children are engaged in the craft, men are missing either due to death or divorce. Even if men are present, they are either employed in commercial *karkhanas* as *karigars* or have adopted other occupations. However, this group maintains marital relations with the core group.

(c) The 'peripheral group' is one where the families of the craftspersons have moved away completely from the traditional line of production. But the members of this group are *zardoz* in terms of their ancestral identity and social relationships.

Before going further into the discussion regarding the Ansari *zardoz*, it is relevant here to point out that the male members of the 'intermediary' and 'peripheral' groups who have adopted other occupations have invariably chosen the work of manufacturing small iron tools by installing machines within the domestic premises. In some households of the intermediary group, two kinds of domestic *karkhanas* i.e. the *zardozi* and tool manufacturing workshop operate simultaneously. As a matter of fact the Ansari *zardoz* distinguish these two types of works by calling them *saf kam* (*zardoz*) and *kala kam* (the work related to production of iron tools). It is, therefore, clear that the alternative profession chosen by the Ansari *zardoz* is termed as *kala kam*.

The discussion here revolves mainly around the core group, touching upon intermediary and peripheral groups only when necessary.

To study the domestic *karkhanedars* we have taken five havelis, where a number of families live in clusters. They are all related to each other. The havelis studied are *Bari Haveli, Chhoti Haveli, Haveli Azam Khan, Haveli Mir Ashim Khan, Haveli Bhojla Pahari.* A few residential dwellings have also been studied. The families living in the havelis arrange their households around the main courtyard, either as nuclear householders or as joint householders. The analysis of the social organisations of these havelis has shown that the residents/owners are broadly divided into three groups referred to above. One may notice with interest that some kind of caste system is evidenced.[7] It is important here to point out that though the domestic *karkhanedars* are by and large *Ansaris*, but all *Ansaris* are not *zardoz*. The occupational identity of certain sections of the *Ansari* community practising *zardozi* craft forms a separate sub-group,[8] who then are identified as a *'jamat'* or *'biradari'*.[9] Among the Muslims this means that

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the person has adopted the characteristics of a particular 'professional community'. In case of the *Ansari zardoz* a '*jamat*' or a '*biradari*' holds a very important position in the almost caste-like structure. Here it is considered to be a prime body for taking care of all the affairs of the *zardoz* community pertaining to endogamy,[10] settling of small disputes, calling for help from kinsmen at times of crisis and for the distribution of work to the fellow-*biradari*.[11]

The aforesaid behavioural pattern shows that the system of '*jamat*' or *biradari*' almost functions like caste.[12] But the two systems are quite distinct from each other.

A look into the social system of the *zardoz* would show that the *Ansari zardoz* do not follow the concept of purity and pollution, which symbolises the specific character of caste; instead we find here a self-imposed restriction in terms of social interaction with the wider *Ansari* group and other Muslims. This is reflected in the decision taken in the closed economic and social interaction by adopting endogamy and professional exclusiveness.

This system leads the *Ansari zardoz* to build a paradigm within the wider *Ansari* community by identification with 'status group'. The search for self identification has, therefore, inculcated among the *Ansari zardoz* a consciousness of status which finds expression in their life style. If we define the status in terms of identity, they appear as a well-knit group, but this does not seem to be valid, when the question regarding their economic position arises. The existence of economic disparity among the *Ansari zardoz* breaks up the community into different status groups. Thus, the consideration of occupation becomes the prime factor. This is so, because the *Ansari zardoz* at one level believes strongly in an occupational, guild-based craft identity; at the other level he practises economic individualism based on independent earnings. The variance in the economic status is caused by the family situations where the number of *karkhanedars* may be more compared to the other families. The economic position of the *Ansari zardoz* is primarily dependent on the quantum of the work produced.

Referring again to the social unit of the *Ansari zardoz* as *biradari* we find that this has served as a unifying bond among the community. I found during several of my discussions with the craftspersons that the two terms viz. *biradari* and *jamat* are used by them concurrently and interchangeably to emphasize their social identity. "We belong to one *jamat* (*Hamari jamat ek hai*)" was the answer to a query as to how they distinguish themselves from the other *Ansari* Muslims. Traditionally they all belong to the weaver group but while negotiating marriage, they do not marry outside their own sub-group. On enquiry why a *zardoz* may not marry a *julaha* we were told that '*julaha to julaha hai hum zardoz hai*!' (Weavers are weavers, we *zardoz*. We belong to separate *jamat*!) The same taboo is noticed in their relation with commercial *karkhanedars*, who belong to the Saiyed, Sheikh and Pathan groups. It is, therefore, clear that the *zardoz* strictly follow the group identity based on profession. It may be of interest to notice that though the two groups of *zardoz*, namely, the domestic *karkhanedars* and commercial *karkhanedars* practise the same craft, the domestic

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karkhanedars distinguish themselves as a distinct group from that of the commercial *karkhanedars* on the basis of group identification.[13]

The presence of the social unity under the *jamat* as shown in the above analysis is found strongly among the domestic *karkhanedars* which is rather relaxed in the case of the *Sunni Saiyed/Sheikh/Pathan zardoz*. It seems that such security given by the *jamat* has been a necessity to the domestic *karkhanedars*, for carrying on their occupation, and for self identification. For an *Ansari zardoz*, the most important factor is to remain a member of the *jamat*.

As noted earlier the *Ansari zardoz* commonly live in a cluster in large residential dwelling called *haveli*. Presently they were seen embroidering small items like badges, belts, purses, banners, *mukuts, tugre* etc. The same group in the pre-independence time is said to have embroidered caps, belts, purses, *dupatta, salvar, kameez, chatar, lahenga* etc. This indicates that previously domestic *karkhanas* had spaces for embroidering *salvar suit, lahenga, dupatta* etc. Due to the shortage of space and also the limited resources of the craftspersons, the bridal suits are produced these days by commercial *karkhanedars* alone. But one may notice that the demand for the pure *zardozi* work has appreciably declined due to the high prices of gold zari and the consequent increase in the price of the dresses. Quite naturally, the craftspersons belonging to domestic *karkhanas* have confined themselves to embroidering small items. The smaller pieces of work which the *Ansari zardoz* produce presently are in great demand in the outside markets of Europe, Japan, U.S.A., Canada and a few Arabian and African countries. On receiving bulk order, the work is completed cooperatively by all members of the *biradari*. But in the absence of such orders, families may have to sit idle. Nowadays this rarely happens. Generally, the orders procured are time-bound, therefore, part of the work which can be finished within the household is retained and the rest is distributed. Such distribution of work means that the particular member of the core group, who has procured the order, becomes *karkhanedar*, and the rest of the members of either the core or intermediary group, to whom the work has been distributed, become the *karigar* or worker. This is, however, a temporary arrangement, but practised continuously. This presents a very interesting situation which arises out of a need-based economy. It is interesting to notice that the relatives of the members of the *jamat* who may otherwise be having an estranged relationship with one another never refuse to receive the work on order from the fellow domestic *karkhanedars*; practically, this informal institution of *karkhanedar* and *karigar* within the *Ansari zardoz 'jamat'* is a well-accepted functional norm based upon their need for mass production within a short time. This reflects the fact that the functional needs of this *jamat* are different from the other *jamat*.

Life Style

One may notice that presently the household[14] unit of this group is changing fast, but the social process through the joint, nuclear and again joint in relation to parents, is found to have been continuing over generations. In the joint household, father, mother, their married sons and unmarried children live together. When this household splits, the married son maintains his own

81. Shawl *bel.* (Above) →

83. *Satbanteli*, the head veil. →

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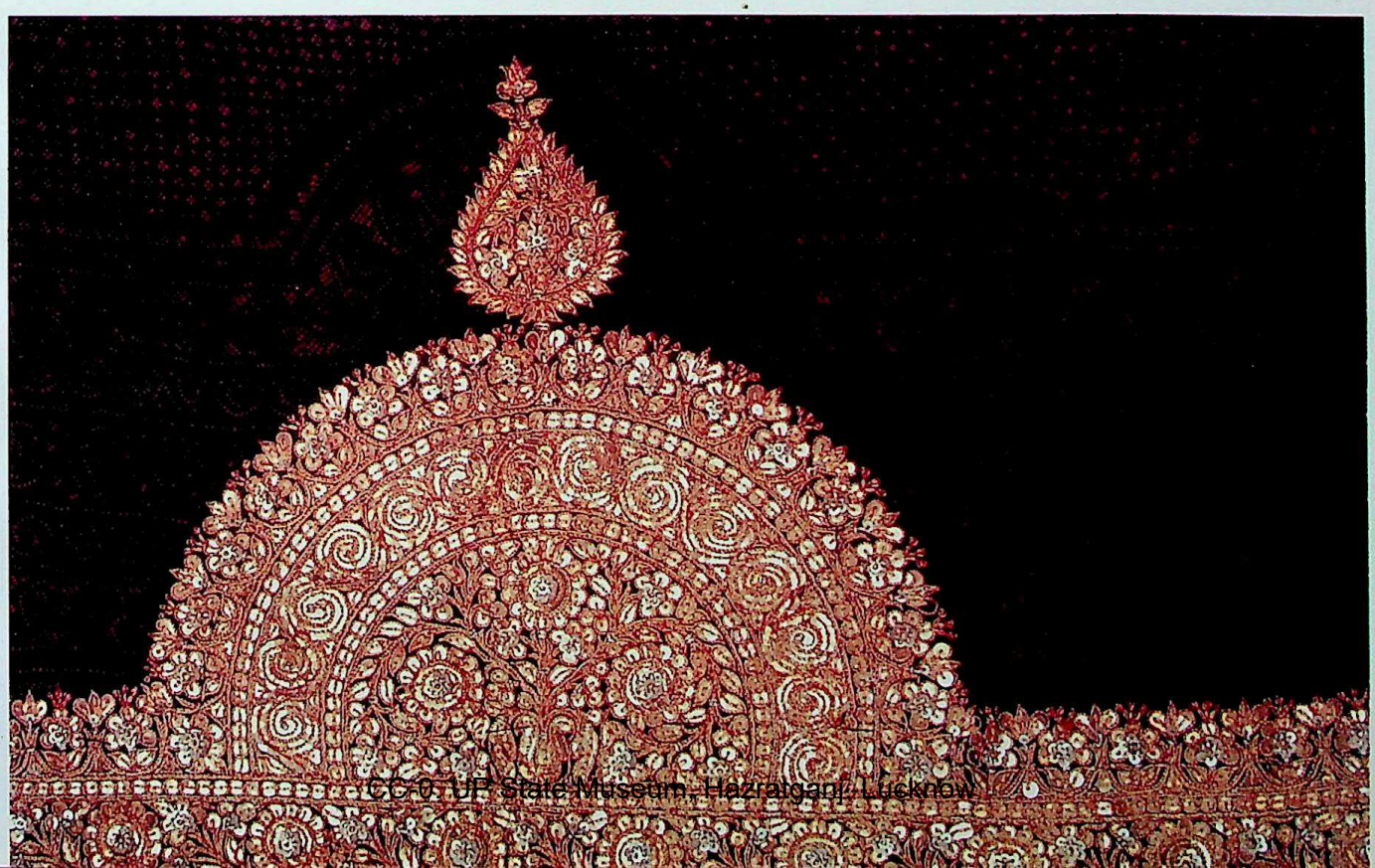

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82. *Doshala.*

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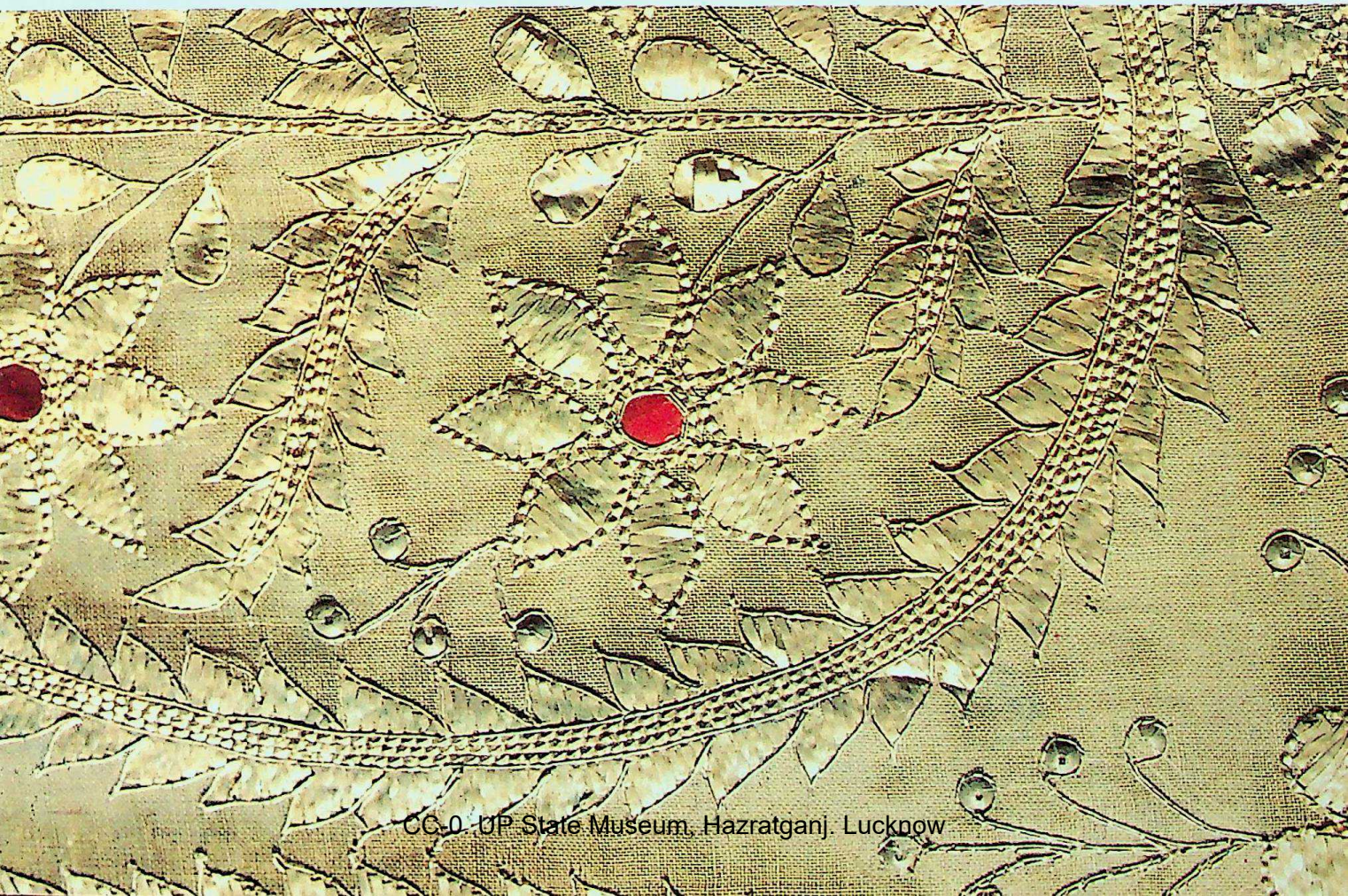
84. *Chunri.*

85. *Odhani,* the head veil.



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86. *Dupatta.* 87. Neck scarf.

88. Folio from Persian style painting narrating story of Sheikh → Sanah and Christian Maiden.

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89. Shah Shuja, son of Shahjahan. 90. Jagat Singh of Mewar, the second son of Raja Malkausa. →

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91. *Angarkha.*

92. *Bugalbandi,* a tight fitting ladies costume.

93. *Angarkha.*

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hearth and lives independently from the other members of the family i.e. father, mother and their unmarried children. The splitting of the family may occur again by marriage and in this way, several small units of a family may emerge with the marriage of all the children. The parents remain disjoint but on becoming old and infirm, they do not constitute part of any single hearth, instead they are looked after by all the male children, who consider it to be their moral responsibility to look after their aged parents.[15] During my field-work I came across a number of families, where the head of the household had an attack of paralysis around the age of 60-65 and lived upto the age of 80-85. He has been well-looked after by his children. This type of family relationship where a family is split for internal necessities has affected the dwelling arrangement of the community. When a daughter-in-law comes into the family, a separate portion is given to the newly weds, when the hearth is separated, the daughter-in-law starts cooking for her own family i.e. her husband and young children in one portion. The result of such fission is that if a household has more sons, over a span of time, the separate hearths divide the complex into very small compartments. But this division is made by arrangement, not by any wall. The hearth in fact is the demarcating line. Since the *zardoz* do not move out of the locality, each house is divided further and further within the same space. Presently the situation is such that three families consisting of 8 to 10 members live in an area of 25 square yards having one small room, verandah and a kitchen. Interestingly, the system of work does not allow them to move out of their residences. Although the hearths are divided, the distribution of work starts within the family. This had been one of the main reasons why all the members of the *Ansari zardoz* community prefer to dwell in Chitliqubar, Turkman Gate, Jama Masjid, Kalan Mahal, and Sui Walan areas. There are very few families from the *biradari* who, because of the paucity of the living space, have shifted to trans-Jamuna areas like Laxmi Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Seelampur etc. Members of these families often commute to old Delhi, once a week or so, to collect the work, but they complete the work in their own domestic *karkhanas*. These are the families of the 'in between' group, where only women are working on the *zardozi* craft and have moved out of the locality because of marriage. Here we may also mention that the members of the peripheral group do not hesitate to move out to trans-Jamuna areas, but since they maintain marital alliances with the other two groups, some families of the peripheral group become part of the intermediary group by marital alliance. This presents a very interesting phenomenon of inter-group mobility among the *Ansari zardoz*.

Out of the five *havelis* of zardoz in the area, I have studied two *havelis* with forty-five families t1horoughly. A *haveli* is usually of more than one storey, built around a central courtyard (*chowk*). The area of *bari haveli* under study is approximately 800 sq yards. There are smaller courtyards (*dar*) raised on a higher platform on three sides. These smaller courtyards lead to the verandahs (*dalan*) followed by rooms (*kamra*). There are usually two staircases placed on two opposite sides of the main courtyard. The fourth side has the service rooms, toilets and a passage to connect the *haveli* with the street. The last is like an

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antechamber attached to the outer gate and is locally known as *dahleez*. Originally there were three large halls in the *bari haveli*, but through the passage of time, due to fission of the family, the division of the halls into rooms by partition walls became necessary. The number of rooms seem to indicate the number of generations the *haveli* accommodates. The number of hearths determine the number of households (Pls. 182, 183).

Apart from these over-congested *havelis* providing shelter and work-space for several families, there are residential dwellings of the Ansari *zardoz*, where only two hearths function in an area of 150 sq yards. A house, located in the Turkman Gate area, had only one single hearth till 1974 when it bifurcated on the marriage of the second son. The owner of the house was the late Mohammed Yakub who had purchased the house from a Hindu in 1969. But such instances are not very frequent.

The *dahleez* seems to play an important role in the life pattern of the *zardoz*. This is the place used for negotiating business with the clienteles.[16] During the field-work, I observed that the clients coming to enquire for the head of the household get access upto the *dahleez*. If the person called for is at home, he comes to the *dahleez*. In case he or any other adult male member is not at home, the message left for the caller is conveyed through a child or by a woman of the house from inside, speaking loudly. And, if the caller wants to leave a message, he also conveys it loudly. Under no circumstances are the business callers allowed to enter the main courtyard (*chowk*). This practice is obviously due to the *purdah* system, for which the intrusion of a stranger into the house is not welcome. As a matter of fact the customers have no proper place to sit on or to wait upon. If the buyers propose to deliver some goods, these are given to the children in the *dahleez* itself in the absence of the adult male. One interesting point I have observed in my study is that, while the clients connected with the craft are not allowed to go beyond the *dahleez*, the vendors are allowed to go inside and sit in the courtyard to sell objects like fruit and other eatables. This system of buying things from vendors reflects an extension of the market system into the household. Also it shows that the women of the *haveli* do not observe strict *purdah* with these vendors. The whole phenomenon may be analysed in the following way. The taboo which has been imposed on the women reflects the male dominance in the craft. It also emphasises the point that a woman, however efficient, can only be a *karigar*, she does not become the *karkhanedar*. On the other hand, the apprenticeship of the male child to the craft starts with activities like doing liaison work between the customers and *karigar*.

Coming to the daily routine of work in the domestic *karkhanas* owned by different families residing in the *haveli*, we have noticed that the work in these *karkhanas* starts around 8-9 o'clock in the morning, after a morning wash and light breakfast. All the adult members of the family sit down to work together on the *karchob*. The work continues till about midday. Older women attend to the lighter work of the kitchen, whereas the younger women get up from the *karchob* time and again to cook the meals (Pl. 182). Thus, both jobs are done simultaneously. When the meals are ready, the *karchob* are pushed to one side and the *dastarkhan* is spread. The cooked food is placed in the centre and all the

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members of the family eat rice and *salan* from a big *thal* keeping *chapatis* in their hand; this is the traditional way of taking meals among the Muslims. After the lunch is over, the work continues again till about 6 o'clock in the evening i.e. till the time of *maghrib* prayer. But when there is an urgent work-order, the work continues till late at night. It is found that the work period of the *zardoz* spreads over the whole day, except for a brief break for lunch. They do not like to disturb the progress of the work; tea is taken only once in the morning and, if required in between, is brought from the market. But one relaxation they indulge in at every workshop is that of taking *pan* at intervals. I noticed that in every household the *pandan* happens to be a very important utensil. *Pan* is prepared by the elder women and is offered to everyone.

During the *ramzan* month, i.e., in the month of fasting, a slight change is noticed in the daily routine. Since the *zardoz* get up early in the morning during this time, at midday they have a nap. The general practice is not to do much work during this month unless there is a specific job to finish within a stipulated time.

Economically, both men and women enjoy independent earnings out of their work. But the senior male member, i.e., the father of the grown-up children, is considered to be the head of the household, even if the family is divided. He is responsible for procuring the orders for their business. This reflects the authority pattern in a patrilineal society where the authority rests with the male head of the family, and the liberty of the women is curbed by the *purdah* system.[17] The division of labour also clearly exists in the working pattern. Work like tracing the design and getting the sample approved are done by men. But once the bulk order is procured, men and women share the equal responsibility of completing the work and get their respective remuneration. In no case can the husband or father demand the earning of the wife or the daughter. Kinship does not interfere with the monetary transaction.

For women, life is very closely organised. They cook the meals, look after the infants and simultaneously do work on the *karchob*. When the child is slightly older, he or she is put under the care of the older children and the mother goes back to her *karchob*. Her role as worker is considered more important than that as a mother. The household work and the other routine chores are done usually by the old ladies and small girls. In the family relations, functions of different members are clearly demarcated. Even a child of the family is not left out of this system. This may be the reason why a child — either male or female—is accepted as an asset in the socio-economic structure of the *zardoz*. The socialisation of children, therefore, is considered a very important step. Education is an important tool of the socialisation process. The attitude of the *zardoz* towards education as part of the socialisation process is exemplified in the education system prevailing among the *Ansari zardoz*.[18] It has been broadly divided into three categories:[19]

Religious education: This includes the learning of the Quran and Sunna through recitation and their application to the total behavioural pattern.
Craft education: This implies formal and informal training in craftsmanship.
Secular education: This refers to the formal education given in schools.

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The religious education starts with the learning of *Sunna*, i.e., the orally transmitted teachings from one generation to another and is normally completed by the age of 10 to 12 years. The introduction of a child to Islamic teachings is a process carried on in the house and at the *madarsa*. The *madarsa* is located in a mosque. Boys are taught by the *hafiz*. The girls are taught privately by elderly ladies who are called as *apajan* or *ustanji* or *baji*.

The craft education of a child starts quite early at an informal level and is an important process of socialization. *Ansari zardoz* consider the training in craft as a part of the religious activity. They say '*karkhane mein ya school mein ilm seekhna mazhabik fariza hai. Kuon ke rozi kamana ya uske liye kam karna Islam mein ibadat hai*' ('To zardoz attainment of knowledge in craft is almost a religious duty, earning a livelihood or working towards earning a livelihood is the same as offering prayer to Allah'). Young children, from the age of 5 years onwards, are found conveying messages to the customers. They are seen very often on the streets carrying *karchob* with designs, or embroidered samples for despatching delivery (Pl. 184). Actually the apprenticeship of the child starts with such liaison work. The atmosphere of the household is also congenial for children to get craft education. Since the *karchob* remain spread throughout the whole day, children get to know the raw material, tools etc. including the importance of the objects, which they never mishandle or spill. They are trained to stay by the side of their parents to learn the work related to the craft. By the age of 10 years children complete their training in the skills of the craft. Boys are trained by a close relative in a separate *karkhana*. Gul Mohammad, a craftsman, told me that 'the father cannot be the teacher for his own son' (*Bap aulad ka ustad nahin ho sakta*). Girls are trained within the house (Pls. 185-187). Though the pattern of craft education is different for boys and girls, at the production level, both are equally skilled (Pl. 189).

Regarding secular education the children are sent to school rather late. But it is found that a child upto the age of ten gets three types of education simultaneously. It is interesting to note that a *zardoz* guardian considers the expenditure incurred on secular education as wasteful (*ikhrajat*). Nevertheless, admission of children to school is practised, though no attention is paid to their studies thereafter. Even if children are good in studies, they are never allowed to go in for higher education. It may be seen that formal education exercises very little influence on these people, who are not yet ready for an open social life. One wonders whether formal education even today has been able to develop the physical, intellectual and moral powers of a *zardoz* as demanded of him, both by the society as a whole and by the *zardoz* community in particular. In fact taking an overall view of the spread of formal education over the larger community of the *zardoz*, one would feel that the contribution of formal education is indeed very limited in comparison to the other two systems of education. During interviews with older people, I gathered that in the pre-independence days, the attitude of the *zardoz* towards secular education was one of utter indifference and any attempt to go for it was openly discouraged. It was considered to be a sheer waste of time and money and referred to as an

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unproductive activity. Presently, primary and middle school education is considered to be important. But higher education is still discouraged.

The above accounts lead us to believe that among the *Ansari zardoz*, education is a social and economic phenomenon. Economically, it is viable when it is learnt in terms of craft but it becomes non-economic when it is not directly connected with the framework of the domestic *karkhana*. It, therefore, has a special meaning which can be comprehended in social milieu within which a child is socialized. Durkheim has rightly observed that 'education puts the child in contact with a given society and not with society in general.[20] This is perhaps the reason why *zardoz* considers formal education to be futile, because it takes one away from the specific society and may take him nearer to another society which to a *zardoz* is unreal. The real education according to the *zardoz* is that which helps the transplantation of traditional skill through constant association. Indeed for an *Ansari zardoz* a domestic *karkhana* is a genuine place of education. We thus see here a four-fold socialization process of children through religious, craft, household and secular education. As adults both men and women conform to their specific roles.

To sum up we may say that the core group of *Ansari zardoz* has a compound identity. He is a craftsperson and also a staunch Muslim. The entire socio-cultural life revolves around this compound identity. The idea is clear that the two identities are inseparable for a *zardoz*. However, marginal changes in the occupational identity have started. While a *zardoz* is found to work at manufacturing iron tools, this work in their own terms is still recognized as *kala-kam*. The group working in this medium automatically goes out of their core position and hence with regard to social standing they are placed at the periphery.

Saiyed/Sheikh/Pathan Zardoz

We have discussed so far about the domestic *karkhanedars*. As mentioned earlier there is a substantial group of commercial *karkhanedars*, who operate their workshops independent of their residential complexes. Since the domestic quarters and the working quarters of this group are located at different places, the character and constitution of the two are different from each other. The working quarters of the *Sheikh/Pathan zardoz* consist of a big hall and a small antechamber. The work is done on several *karchobs* in the big hall, whereas the small antechamber is used for negotiating business with the customers. The residential quarters of this group are found to be more organized within definite areas allotted for the kitchen, living room, verandah, privy and bathroom.

Since the *zardoz* under this group are broadly Saiyeds, Sheikhs and Pathans, they do not confine their social interaction to the level of *biradari*. As a matter of fact the distinguishing line demarcating them from the wider community of the Muslims happens to be *kaum* or distinctive group. This means that in the process of interaction with other Muslims, they are separately grouped as the *Saiyed/Pathan/Khan* community. Their marital relationships are

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usually formed within this wider group. While the occupational identity of this group is well earmarked, *kaum* becomes the interacting field in terms of kinship and marriage ties. A commercial *karkhanedar* does not require any professional security from the *kaum* and the *kaum* remains completely away from the commercial activities of the *zardoz*. In no case does the craft identity become a determining factor of marriage. Thus, commercial *zardoz* both in their social and commercial situations stand apart from domestic *karkhanedars*. The commercial *karkhanedars* get the orders for the work from the wider market and distribute it amongst their employees, who are the *karigars*, either on fixed wages or on a daily wage basis. Here a distinct master-servant relationship exists between the owners and the *karigars*. The owners here are the privileged group, who get the work done by the *karigars*, who work in return for money. There are two categories of *karigars*. One is of the traditional *Ansari zardoz* and the other is of the migrant craftsmen. The first group consists of those people who prefer to work in the commercial *karkhanas* instead of their domestic *karkhana*. These people are considered as the master craftsmen, who are supposed to know the technicalities better than the other workers. They are naturally better paid. Normally, only one such *karigar* is found in each commercial *karkhana* as an *ustad* and he receives the maximum wages for his skills. The migrant craftspersons, on the other hand, are not the skilled *karigars* but the farmers from the villages, who come to the capital city during the lean season of farming to earn some extra wages. These craftspersons are also called the *ari-wala* or the *ari* workers, as they work with the *hath-ari*, which is easier to handle. The migrant craftspersons are recruited at all levels i.e. from apprenticeship to the finished stages. Their wages are increased as they become more skilled. The migrant *karigars*, who are the floating population, live in the *karkhanas* and get their food from the nearby shops. On becoming skilled workers they even change their place of work sometimes i.e. they shift to another *karkhana*, where they can earn better wages. The *ari-wale* have their own network in the city. Generally these craftsmen, mostly Muslims, hail from the villages of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The whole working organization of these *karkhanas* provides the opportunity of work to anyone conversant with the *zardozi* technique, and is not dependent upon the kinship extension i.e. the *biradari* or *jamat* as is found among the domestic *karkhanedars*.

In the course of interviews I found the genesis of *Saiyed/Sheikh/Pathan zardoz* lies in their association with the provincial courts. Their ancestors were involved in the manufacture of large furnishing materials, trappings etc. The designs and work patterns of these items were always massive. Nowadays they form the non-orthodox group of *zardoz* who frequently change their work pattern, designs etc. depending on the fashion-trends. Generally large items like *sari, jackets, salvar kameez, lahenga* etc. are embroidered in these *karkhanas*. The earnings of the *karkhana* owners are more stable and regular, which can be clearly understood from their affluent style of living.

Karkhanedars leave the house for work at around 9 o'clock in the morning and remain at the place of work till late evening, sometimes even later, depending upon the work-load. Generally they go home to have their meals

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94. Front view of No. 93.

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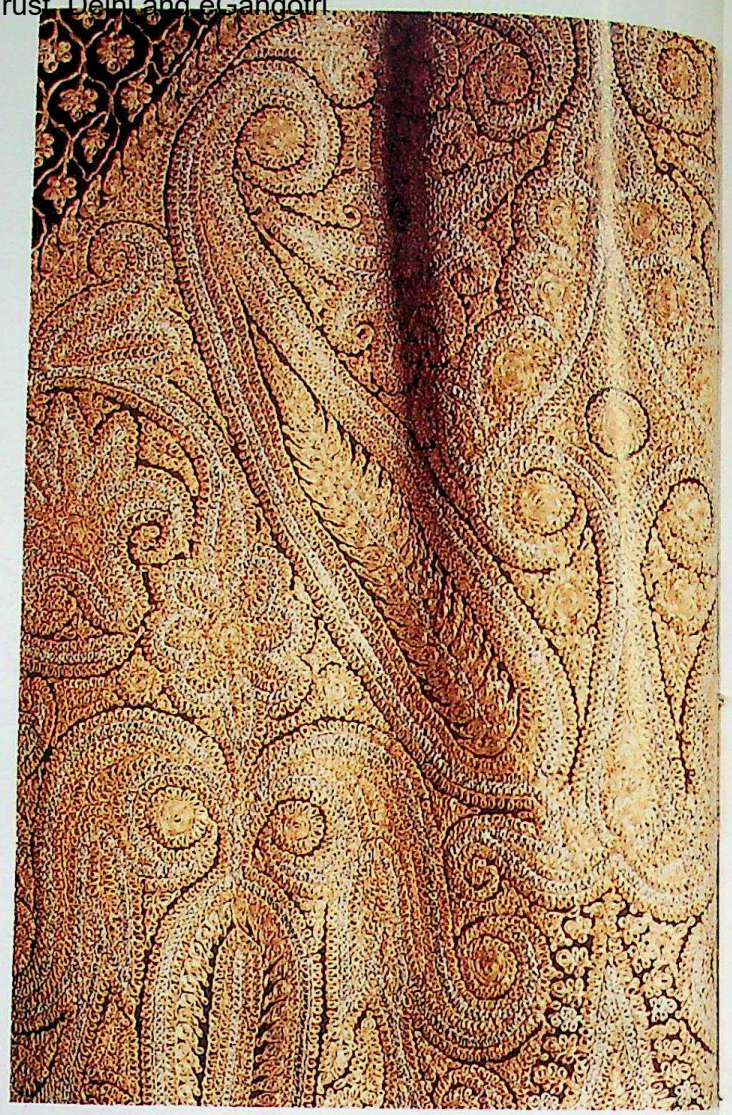
95. *Achkan.*



96. *Choga.*

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but sometimes when the need arises, lunch is delivered to them at the *karkhana* by the children.

Since the residences of this group are away from the production premises, the participation of the female members of the community in the craft is minimal. Men remain the sole practitioners of the craft and there is least interference of social organization in the economic organization. Women devote their time to look after the children and the kitchen. After the men leave for work, they prepare meals etc. In this group the girls and boys have distinct roles to play, there is a marked division of labour and also a varied education pattern and socialization process.

Position of women is inferior compared to the women in the families of the domestic *karkhanedar*. This was evident when I worked in my field. I did not have easy access to the women living in residential complex. Interestingly the obstructions were imposed by the male members. This was just in contradiction to women belonging to the domestic *karkhana*. The reasons seems to be economic and religious.

In domestic *karkhanas* the *Ansari zardoz* women enjoyed almost equal status in terms of economic independence granted by the *biradari*. But here, the *kaum* formed by the *Sheikh*, *Pathan* and *Khan*, who call themselves aristocrat Muslims, keep their women completely away from the male-dominated society in terms of economic participation.

Unlike the *biradari*, this *kaum* does not interfere with the position of women. Here binding force is *Islam*. The children are sent for religious education in early childhood and admitted to school at the proper age. Since girls are kept away from the craft, they get more time and opportunity for secular education. At times, after the completion of proper education they are employed as teachers. Secular education is encouraged for boys as well. But as part of the household education boys interact constantly with the *karkhanas*. By the time they are grown up, they are fully aware of the operation and organization of the commercial *karkhanas* and if need arises can operate it smoothly. As one of the informants from the field, Hazi Maqbool Khan elaborated, 'The son should always know about his father's trade. If he is not able to get a better opportunity, he may at any time come back to the mainstream of their traditional occupation.' The process of deviation from association with the craft education is slow and natural. If the son is good in secular education and chooses a career for himself, he is extended all possible help for the same by his father. In case his performance is not good at school, he is encouraged to learn the craft. Thus the choice of accepting profession becomes multifaceted. College education is very common for boys and girls and parents feel a sense of pride in sending their offspring to college. Many boys start operating the *karkhanas* after attaining a post-graduate degree.

It is worthwhile to mention here that despite several deviations from the traditional occupation, male members of this group never work in the *khairat karkhana*, which is the second preferable occupation for the members of the first group. If two sons propose to join the traditional occupation, all help is extended to them to open their own commercial *karkhana*, which mainly requires a capital for hiring a large space.

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To sum up we may say that the *zardoz* community is identified by two sub-groups viz. Sheikh/Ansari *zardoz* and Saiyed/Sheikh/Pathan *zardoz*. Both the groups are continuing the traditional craft with modifications. These modifications are insignificant in changing their overall identity as a craft group. The organization of their socio-economic system is more or less like a closed group which admits interaction with the outside world only with an economic network through which it regulates and perpetuates the system in itself.

The two categories of the *zardozi* craftspersons have two different systems of social organization despite following the same craft. Group identity on the basis of the craft is important and this is relevant in relation to the wider sub-group. But with these sub-groups the separate identity is also maintained. Rooted in the same craft, the aspiration levels of the members of the two groups are found to be quite different. Among the domestic *karkhanedars*, the craft is considered to be the synonym of the religion or *ibadat*. Here the craftspersons are very protective about the craft and technological practices which they have been following from the Mughal period onwards. But among the other groups, that is the commercial *karkhanedars*, the craft is considered in material terms and thus is bound to exploit and also pollute according to changing requirements. There is thus a total deviation from the established technology and the type. The two groups live side by side in the same locale, interacting with each other and perpetuating the craft, but following two directions. The first group is homogeneous, female participation in craft is essential. Marital alliances with other *Ansari* are discouraged. Economic identity is the basis of the kinship alliances. The second group is heterogeneous, female participation in the craft is altogether absent. Marital alliances with other Saiyed/Sheikh/Pathan are allowed. Economic identity does not interfere with kinship alliances.

While discussing the relationship between the *zardoz* and *zardozi* we arrive at two important points. It is found that on the one hand, group orthodoxy, lack of education and religious consciousness have led to the preservation of the traditional values of the craft which concurrently have provided economic status to all, including the female members of the community as well; on the other hand, better education and enlightened views have led also to the deterioration of craft in the traditional-technological sense. But the latter process has opened the craft to a wider market which has helped in perpetuating the craft. Quite naturally, the craft at this stage witnesses a new phenomenon because of the inclusion of non-traditional groups as craftspersons. But by and large the economic organization relating to production, exchange, consumption and occupational structure is maintained both by the traditional and non-traditional craftspersons through various processes of interactions and interrelations.

97. Back detail of No. 96.→

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98. Body detail of No. 96.

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99. Detail of a *choga* showing arrangement of *kairi* motif.

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Footnotes

1. There have not been any previous studies on zardoz community ethnographically or otherwise, except a few economic surveys.
2. Fanshawe, 1902.
3. There are two main branches of Islam, Sunni and Shia which are strictly endogamous. For details of legal restrictions see Blunt, 1969, pp. 192-194.
4. Ansari (the helpers) was the name given to the citizen of Madina after conversion (Blunt, 1969, p. 188).
5. The term caste is used here because it is the term popularly used by these groups. It does not imply that they are the castes in the technical sense. Those who claim descent from the Prophet through his daughter Fatima and Ali are called Saiyeds, an Arabic title which means prince; the others are known as Sheikhs, another Arabic title meaning chief (Blunt, 1969, p. 183). The word 'Pathan' is a Hindi corruption of a Persian word 'Pakhtana' or 'Pashtana', which means the speakers of the language (Blunt, 1969, p. 73). Most of the Sheikh scions take their name from an anonymous ancestor (Blunt, 1969, p. 187).
6. Peattie Lisa R., 1982, pp. 215-216.
7. Leach, E.R., 1960, p. 115, Hsu Francis, L.K., 1963, p. 95.
8. Cf. the study of chamars an occupational group by Bhatt, G.S., 1974, pp. 174-186.
9. The concept of an occupational subculture forming *biradari* has also been discussed by S. Channa in her work on the washerman in the same area. Channa, S., 1985, p. 29.
10. The castes are separated from each other by concepts of purity and pollution which places restrictions on social interaction between them thus reinforcing the divisions created by edogamy. Barth in his study of Swat Pathans has made similar observation. The craftsmen appear to form a virtually completely endogamous group, 1956, p. 41. Barth also stresses group endogamy: "The permission or ban on inter-marriage between different descent groups carries hierarchical connotations, though at no time caste system is found." Ibid., p. 40. V.C. Channa has treated caste also as a status group. "Parents use their authority to transmit their status to their offsprings not only through training and education but also by marriage and transmission of property", 1979, pp. 130-131.
11. The concept of Biradari has been discussed by S. Channa. She writes, "thus the *biradari* emerges as a security providing status giving body and as the locus of prestige of an individual. It has an existence at the supra-individual level in terms of its value system. It is not merely an agglomeration of individual relationship but a body of commonly shared values, of brotherliness, cooperation, and identification which is ingrained by individuals through the process of enculturation. An individual enters by birth into the *biradari*, grows up into it internalizing its values, learning to conform to its sanctions and in turn initiates his children into it, leaving it only at death. From birth till death, a majority of his activities are, so to say, within the 'biradari'. It provides him with a marriage partner, an occupation, life-long security and most of all it provides him with a locus on which to anchor himself in society, whatever an individual's status is, he has some reference to his 'biradari'. Once the 'biradari' is taken away from him, he is lost in a web of impersonal relationship, which provides him with little ascriptive identity. The functional operative aspects of the '*biradari*' are related to the above-stated values. Economic cooperation which can be achieved only through the feelings of brotherhood and belongingness associated with the '*biradari*' is essential for survival", 1985, pp. 32-33.
12. Frederick Barth has also considered craftsman families to be divisible in separate 'Qaum' — loosely translatable as caste, 1956, pp. 25, 40.
13. Gupta, Raghuraj, 1974, pp. 187-198.
14. Netting, Robert M.C.C., Richard R. Wilk and Eric J. Arnold have considered the household to be a fundamental social and economic unit. Households are a primary arena for the expression of age and sex roles, kinship, socialization and economic cooperation where the very stuff of culture is mediated and transformed into action. Here, individual motives and activities must be coordi-

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nated and rendered mutually intelligible, 1984, p. xxii.

15. For detailed analysis of household also see Halperin Rhoda, 1985, pp. 346-351. Hammel Eugene and Peter Haslett, 1974, pp. 74-109.
Haslett, Peter and Richard Walls, eds., 1972.

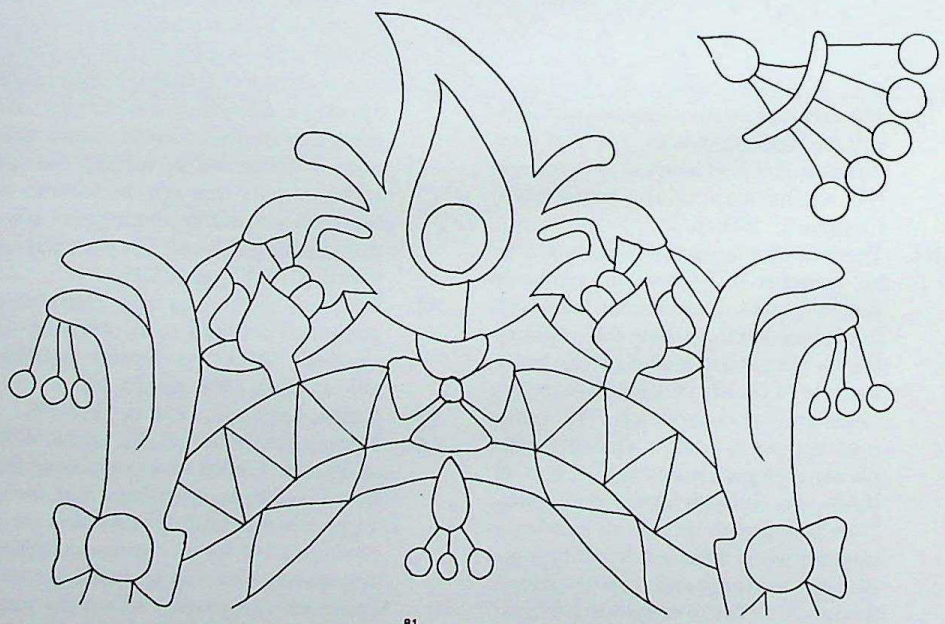
16. "Any community may be viewed as an economic mechanism, the structure of which is made up of what is called its institutions." Veblen, 1912, p. 193. These institutions prescribe the habitual methods for carrying the life process of the community in contact with the material environment in which it lives. Use of the boundaries of the *dahleez* for negotiating business reflects the development of such institutional habits.

17. For details on Purdah among Muslim women see Roy, S., 1979, pp. 26-48.

18. Education according to Durkheim is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states, which are demanded of him both by the political society as a whole and special milieu for which he is specifically destined, 1956, 71. This definition of education fits in well with the educational condition that now prevails among the zardoz in so far as it takes into account physical, social, moral and economic influences on their children.

19. The distinction between secular / craft / religious education is important in view of the relative significance attached to these by the members of different status groups among the zardoz. "Each type of people has its own education, that is appropriate for it and that can serve to define it, just as its moral, political and religious organization." Durkheim, 1956, p. 28.
Roy, S., 1979, pp. 49-71.

20. Durkheim, 1956, p. 31.



81

100. The body of the *choga* at No. 99. →

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101. Another detail of *choga* at No. 99.

102. *Abho.*

104. Detail of design on front yoke No. 102.

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KARKHANA: PRODUCTION SYNTHESIS

Zardozi as a craft tradition blossomed around rulers and their courts. It passively got absorbed in the *bazar* tradition which extended beyond peripheral boundaries of the Indian sub-continent, stretching its wings to the export market.

The traditional system of production for these crafts was the organizational set-up of *karkhana*.[1] Many court crafts disintegrated and perished but the production organization of the *zardozi* craft sought suitable adaptation; in the changing environment emerged new production organizations.[2] The *zardozi karkhana* can be grouped in three categories, viz.:

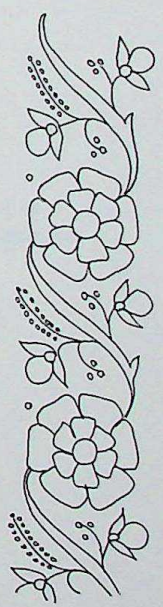
Court *karkhana*
Domestic *karkhana*
Commercial *karkhana*

Court Karkhana

This means an organizational system controlled by the court. The situation of the court seems to have dictated and conditioned the growth, development and decline of the court *karkhanas*.

The earliest evidence of the manufacture of gold embroidery in an organised way goes back to the time of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlak. References to the state factories of Tughlak are cited by Barani, Quluqshandi, Ibn Batuta. Noble crafts including jewellery, embroidery, costumes etc. were manufactured in these factories under the direct patronage of the Sultan of Delhi. Although the minute details on the organisation of such *karkhanas* are not available, such places of manufacture have been referred to as *tiraz* factory (*dar-al-tiraz*).[3] The establishment of *tiraz* factories was the 'ramification of the ABBASID *tiraz* system', where it was obligatory for the king to recognise the Abbasid Caliphate and in turn receive the gift of a robe of honour.[4] Ziya-ud-Din Barani has also recorded the manufacture of gold embroideries in such factories under the reign of Sultan Mohammad (1320-1351).[5] The travel accounts of Ibn Batuta also give details of a blue silk garment embroidered in gold and spangled with jewels, which he received as a robe of honour from Muhammad Shah. He has also categorically opined that the manufacture of this robe was done in Delhi at a *tiraz* factory.[6]

During this period there was direct trade and manufacture of such items between India and Persia. Marvellous textiles seem to have been manufactured including spangled linen cloth.



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Describing the organisation of the court *karkhana* at this time, Quluqshandi records the employment of four thousand manufacturers of silk, who were engaged in making all kinds of textiles for robes of honour (*khilla*), ordinary robes (*kasawa*) and presents (*itlakat*).[7] Despite the existence of such court *karkhanas* during the Sultanate period, the court requirement of such items was also fulfilled through trade with Iraq, Alexandria and China. It does not necessarily mean that the manufacturers of silk were making embroidered cloth but other references cited above clearly reveal the manufacture of such items at factories in Delhi.[8] It is also possible that initially, during the Sultanate period only the silk which was manufactured at *tiraz* factories was embellished by the craftsmen coming from elsewhere (Persia) who might have joined the court *karkhana* at the court of the Delhi Sultan at a later date.[9]

Data in regard to the imperial workshops or court *karkhanas* during the Mughal period are in plenty. The idea of establishing court workshops where craftsmen could work directly under royal patronage was the most popular one during the period of Akbar. We get a most picturesque description of the *karkhanas* prevalent during this time from Abul Fazl who writes, "His majesty pays much attention to various stuffs, hence 'Irani', 'European' and Mongolian articles of wear are in abundance. Skilful masters and workmen have settled in this country to teach the people an improved system of manufacture. The imperial workshops in the towns of Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur, Ahmedabad, turn out many masterpieces of workmanship and the figures and patterns, knots and variety of fashions which now prevail, astonish experienced travellers. His majesty himself acquired in a short time a theoretical and practical knowledge of the whole trade, and on account of the care bestowed upon them, the intelligent workmen of this country soon improved. All kinds of hair weaving and silk spinning were brought to perfection and the imperial workshops furnish all those stuffs which are made in other countries."[10]

The description reveals the existence of the imperial workshops where not only local craftsmen worked but which were also the centres for improving the skills of the craftsmen with the help of the masters coming from Iran, Mongolia and Europe. Also, these *karkhanas* were located in almost all the Muslim princely states. Although the vivid description of the imperial workshops given in the Ain-i-Akbari does not specifically mention the *zardozi* craft, the very fact that the Ain-i-Akbari shows awareness of this craft including its manufacturing technique, is sufficient to prove that the *zardozi* items which were in fashion were also manufactured in these imperial workshops.

It is not clearly known as to when and how did these *karkhanas* emerge. The detailed descriptions of the imperial workshops, regarding their organisation and administration are not available either. But, since *zardozi* as a craft as found till today is understood to have originated in Persia, it may be assumed that the production of the craft in the court *karkhana* was conducted in a manner which was done in the palace *karkhanas* under the Persian Safavid Dynasty.[11] Apart from fulfilling the royal commissions, the craftsmen were probably free to undertake orders and to produce goods for the commercial market. The

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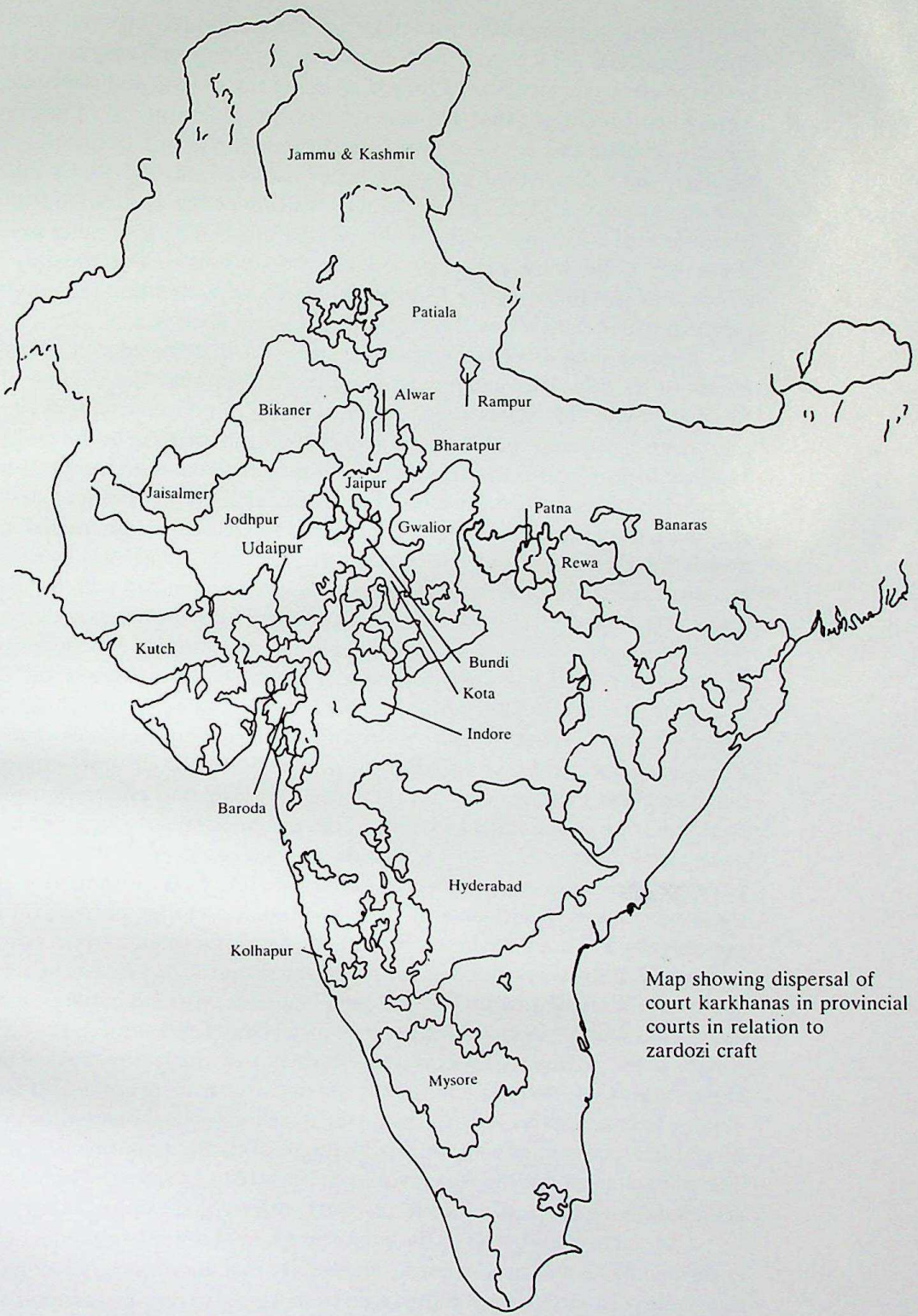

Map showing dispersal of court karkhanas in provincial courts in relation to zardozi craft

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craftspersons working in the imperial workshops definitely enjoyed the status of royal servants, which gave them more security along with easy access to the best raw materials available. While discussing the shawls and stuffs etc. the Ain-i-Akbari mentions that 'his majesty took personal interest in improving the department and actually improved in four kinds viz. firstly the *shawl*; secondly *safid alchas* meaning any kind of corded stuff; thirdly in stuffs as *zardozi, kalabatun, kashida, qalghal, bandhnun, chhint, alcha, purzdar*; fourthly an improvement was made in the width of all stuffs.'[12] The above steps clearly show that while in the earlier period, the robe of honour was the only item which was produced in the factory, at a later time attention was given to produce wider cloth for making full formed noble dresses.

Although the court *karkhana* as a system was introduced in the imperial courts of the Mughals, our evidence suggests that after the decline of the Mughal power this system was taken over by Hindu courts as well. The patronage of the craft could be seen in the provincial courts of both Hindu and Muslim rulers. Organisationally, the establishment of the court *karkhanas* in the provincial courts was on the lines of the Mughal courts. The dispersal of the craftsmen from the court workshops of Agra and Delhi to the provincial courts meant that the *karkhanas* were not only well scattered, but at this juncture, the artisans readily adopted new ideas and imageries connected with the Hindu states. It is not known how far the men who drifted from the court *karkhanas* and settled in the provincial towns formed separate communities. But the existence of pockets of *zardozi* craftsmen in Banaras, Rampur, Bareilly, Agra in the North, Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, Ahmedabad, Surat in Gujarat, Jaipur, Jodhpur in Rajasthan, and Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, clearly indicates that they formed separate *zardoz* groups. But the prevalence of the custom of marriage between these groups no doubt indicates that they had emerged from the common source. The court *karkhanas* of the provincial courts were referred to as *riyasati karkhanas.* Our source materials for knowing about these *karkhanas* have been primarily contemporary writings, but interesting information about these workshops is available in their genealogical stories passing through generations. We have not been able to gather any information from our field survey about the workshops under the Mughal courts. But we have collected some data showing that they at one time had been working in the provincial courts, but with the abolition of the provincial courts and consequent disintegration of the provincial *karkhanas* these craftspersons have come back to Delhi. We also have information telling how the *toshakhanas* were not only treasury, as popularly known but they were also the storehouses for the treasured objects like *zardozi* items which were studded with precious and semi-precious stones. The craftsmen used to move from one provincial court to another or remained attached to one particular provincial court with frequent visits to Delhi.

Our survey has given us an interesting hint about the settlement of the craftsmen. We have found from our field study that many *zardoz* while tracing their history claim to have come to Delhi from Agra. This impresses upon us the fact that, when the seat of power shifted to Delhi from Agra during the Mughal

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period, a large number of craftspersons, who were formerly attached to the royal courts of Agra, had also moved to Delhi—the new seat of the Mughal rule.

Organization of Court Karkhanas

While discussing the organisational pattern of the court *karkhanas* we find that the craftspersons used to come in the morning to report for work; and after finishing the day's work they used to leave in the evening. The raw materials for the embroidery and the items to be embroidered along with the tools etc. were provided for by the court or nobility. The craftsmen although working on definite guidelines given by their clients had freedom to experiment with new designs, which, if approved, brought good rewards to them. This brought in an element of competition among them for producing items of better quality. As a result the craft seems to have made a natural progress. The second type of court *karkhanas* emerged during the Mughal period when the functioning of such *karkhanas* was at the peak, where interchange of ideas was incòrporated in relation to the prosperity of the craft.

With the decline of the Mughal power, the organisation of imperial *karkhanas* was adopted by the provincial *karkhanas*. The daily work of these *karkhanas* used to follow a regular routine, which was approved of by the appointed person of the court. The fortune of the court *karkhanas* faced similar ups and downs as the ruling courts.

The information regarding the organisation and functioning of the court *karkhanas* is found in the travel accounts of the Frenchman Bernier, who visited the court of emperor Aurangzeb at Delhi and left a vivid description of the imperial workshops of the time. Bernier described the *karkhanas* as 'large halls' where different crafts including embroidery work were done. These were the royal production workshops. Bernier writes, 'In one of these halls you see the embroiderers occupied in their work with the master who supervises them.'[13] This reflects the organisational pattern of these *karkhanas* where a large number of craftsmen worked under the head craftsman, who must have attained better skills to guide and supervise. Apart from this, Bernier also discussed the daily work-pattern of the individual craftsman working in the court *karkhana*, who after the whole day's work is said to have returned in the evening to his house. According to him, the craftsmen were so contented with the organisational pattern of their *karkhanas*, that they did not aspire to anything beyond.

Referring to the court *karkhanas*, particularly at Delhi, Athar Ali contends that "apart from the ruler himself other royalty including queens, princes, princesses and nobles mainly possessed their own *karkhanas*. This was done not merely to cater to their household needs but also to augment their income."[14] This implies that the products of the court *karkhanas* were also sold outside the court by the nobles and the income coming from them was earned by the respective owners of the *karkhanas*. We may, therefore, infer that a particular court invariably had many *karkhanas* running simultaneously.

Bernier has also made implicit comparison between the situations prevailing in France and in India, particularly in Delhi. He states that the articles produced by these *karkhanas* were of very high quality and considered to be

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excellent pieces of art.[15] Asserting a similar observation Athar Ali says that 'The desire for luxuries and for obtaining articles made according to their own tastes and specifications led the nobility in general to have their own *karkhanas* or workshops for manufacturing robes...etc. which sometimes employed quite a large number of artisans.'[16]

The structural pattern of the *karkhana* system was such that an embroiderer would make his son an embroiderer. This actually followed the traditional system of passing the skill through the lineage. Bernier also had emphasised this point, saying that 'Each person goes only with his own people, of his trade.'[17] This is observed in all the crafts irrespective of religion. Thus a clear group identity based on the craft is found to have existed among the *zardoz*, where the artisans were not only the part of the guild system, but also marked the continuity of the traditional occupation. Interestingly such a system was maintained in the male line. This continuity of the tradition of the *zardozi* craft in lineage pattern can be seen even today.

Various accounts from different sources tend to indicate that the *zardozi* craft flourished profusely during the Mughal period in the court *karkhanas*. The point which I wish to emphasize here is that in spite of having this professional identity, and possessing efficiency of skill, a *zardoz* in a court *karkhana* was only an employee, who had to work according to the norms laid down by his employer. In such places the craftsman was not bothered about the marketing channels of his products, which were handled by the masters of the *karkhanas*. But the urge for producing the best things in the *karkhanas* by the individual owners acted as catalytic factor for the promotion of the craft. In fact as told by the craftsmen interviewed by the author, Delhi had a good number of court *karkhanas* which stood in stiff competition with one another.

During the Mughal period, it is clearly stated that there were imperial workshops to meet the court needs; besides these workshops, it is also observed that the emperor received the products from the other centres owned by private individuals. This reflects that the commercial *karkhanas* outside the court were developing simultaneously with the court *karkhanas*, even during the peak of prosperity of the craft.

We have already observed that, with the disintegration of the Mughal court, there was a large scale migration of artisans to the provincial courts resulting in the emergence of a number of provincial *karkhanas*. The provincial court *karkhanas* were organised and structured much in the same way as the Mughal court *karkhanas*. The main difference was of patronisation, where a large number of Hindu rulers were also involved. These rulers formed their principalities in the courts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Banaras, Bhopal, Patiala, Rampur, Kathiawar, Ramnagar, Jaipur and Junagarh. Consequently each court developed its own *karkhana*. It may be mentioned in this connection that the provincial court *karkhanas* which were the major forte of the *zardoz* after the Mughal rulers disappeared, came to an abrupt end after the independence of India. Though many of the provincial courts were ruled by the Hindus the *zardoz* found themselves easily accommodated by these rulers. The main reason for this warm acceptance was that the objects produced by the *zardoz* were already popular in the provincial courts under the Mughal influence.

103. Detail of design on shoulder of No. 102. →

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106. *Choga.*

107. Coat.

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108. Miniature folio from Ragmala series depicting ragini Vinod.

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114. *Kurti.*

109. *Lahenga.* (Above)

115. *Choli, Lahenga.*

116. *Kanchali,* the short, well-fitting bodice for women.

110. *Ghaghra.* (Above)

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117. Back view of No. 116.

120. Jacket.

121. Front view of No. 120.

123. Crown.

118. Jacket.

119. Jacket.

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In the course of my field study I gathered some information about the *zardoz* working in the provincial courts. I found from my data that these embroiderers were of two types. One, consisting of those who were the migrant. They worked on ad-hoc basis for fulfilling some special commission and on completion of their work went back to Delhi, their original place of work. The members of other group shifted to provincial courts seeking shelter and work both. About the first category of embroiderers I give below the evidence collected from Gul Mohammad. I met Gul Mohammad, a craftsman belonging to a *zardoz* family of Delhi, who served in the Junagarh court in his youth. He along with a group went to the Junagarh court for fulfilling a commission given by the ruler for a marriage in the family. They stayed there continuously for six months.

He said that in the court there were already different categories of *zardozi* craftsmen, working both for the large furnishing embroidery work as well as the delicate work of *sherwanis, lahengas, chunris* and other items of personal use.[18] There was a chief embroiderer who was in charge of the workshop. He interfered quite often for controlling the quality of designs. But often the ladies of the house intervened in the work. Sometimes they gave their own choice of designs for their dresses and pursued the progress of the work. It is found that like the typical court *karkhanas*, there too the *zardoz* women did not have any part in the production. It was entirely a male-oriented system. The timings of the work maintained a strict system. Gul recalled, '*kam to bahutera rahata tha par ek time bandha hua tha*' ('There was plenty of work, but the hours were fixed'). From morning they worked till *maghrib* prayers i.e. the prayer time fixed at sunset. Noon meals were provided by the owners at the *karkhana* itself. Apart from this they were offered accommodation and free dinner. He found a number of artisan groups working in the same court with them. But there was no interference either at work or at the place of rest. In the residential apartments different groups of craftspersons with their families stayed in different pockets within the same complex.

The payments to these embroiderers were made lavishly. In 1937-38 Gul was paid at the rate of Rs. 1 for $1^1/_2$ *tolas* of metal embroidered. Good craftsmen could lay about 30 to 40 *tolas* of metal in a day, thus their earnings ranged from Rs. 20 to 30 per day. The payments were not fixed, as these were dependent primarily upon the skill of the craftsmen. So this could be increased or decreased on the basis of the quality of the work produced. The payments were smooth and easy.

The nobility at the court often provided free entertainment for the craftspersons. Gul Mohammad distinctly remembers having seen silent movies during his stay at the court. The craftsmen usually got this type of assignment in the court on special occasions, like a marriage or coronation. Such works normally started a year ahead of the occasion. Since the migrant craftsmen were not attached to any particular court, they were found moving from one court to the other on individual requirement of each court.

The informant of the second group was Mohd. Maqbul Khan, who had gone to Patiala court as a child with his father Mehboob Khan. Mehboob Khan

←122. The folio from miniature painting of Shiraj.

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whose family was originally attached to the Delhi court had gone there on the abolition of the court of the last Mughal king. He is reported to have stayed in Patiala court for about 20 years. However on abolition of the provincial court Maqbul Khan came back to Delhi. While they were working in Patiala court he and his father were engaged in embroidering large furnishing materials including animal trapping. They were attached to the court on a monthly salary basis and were given family quarters. Maqbul Khan used to accompany his father to the court workshops even as a child and learnt the skills of the craft in his childhood. We are informed that in Patiala court, the system of bringing migrant embroiderers from Delhi for doing specially commissioned work was in practice. In this case the embroiderers were given a lump sum of the money on the basis of work produced. Thus it is apparent that court *karkhanas* provided employment to the craftsmen both on salary basis and on the basis of work output. Allotment of family quarters to the craftsmen was the normal practice. The work was always supervised by a better skilled craftsman, but the owners of the *karkhana* always had the right to intervene to see or to check the progress of the work. The craftsmen could also evolve new designs, if these were appreciated by the owners.

One may notice that a continuity of tradition was maintained from the Mughal to the provincial courts. But the abolition of the provincial courts gravely affected the life pattern of the *zardoz* as a community.

But fortunately one of the principles of British rule in India was providing patronage and protection to the indigenous craft and art work, almost in the line of Mughal tradition. We know from our field data that for three Delhi darbars, in 1877, 1903 and 1911, lots of *zardoz* were commissioned for doing the *zardozi* work on items like animal trapping, hangings, military dresses with insignia, curtains, parasols, umbrellas or any other items required for the occasion. This seems to be a turning point in the system of *karkhanas* prevailing under the Mughal and provincial court tradition. As a matter of fact with the beginning of this era, the older court *karkhana* system was completely abolished. But the *zardozi* work was done in full swing on the orders given by these new rulers. This resulted in the growth of a new system of work-condition, where the *zardoz* did their work in two completely separate organizations. In one they brought *karchob* in their home thus evolving a system of domestic *karkhana* where men, women and children are all wage earners; in another the menfolk established their workshop away from their home at a place where work was done on commercial basis only by the male members of the *zardoz* community. This was an appendage of the court *karkhana*.

Needless to say that these new organizational set-ups were the domestic *karkhanas* and the commercial *karkhanas*.

The earlier chapters throw light on how the domestic *karkhanas* evolved as a new workshop system within their residential quarters.[19] There is no doubt that this new system was the outcome of the disappearance of the court *karkhanas*, but this brought in a new dimension in the organizational and working pattern. Since these *karkhanas* were located inside the residential complexes, the family members consequently became part and parcel of the

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production process. As a result each member of the family had some sort of role to play in the work, breaking thereby the age-old tradition of continuing the skill through the male line. These *karkhanas* were important both from the angle of social organisation and from the economic point of view. When the courts became non-existent and the workshops moved away elsewhere, the individual craftsmen for their survival started collecting work from various sources and established the workshops at their own residences. The shifting of *karkhana* to domestic quarters brought specific changes in the female participation. This system provided neither the patronage of the rich aristocrats encouraging works of excellence, nor was there an assured marketing channel for the objects produced. The new problem of orders and supplies faced by the craftspersons caused restriction on the craft activities. But there was also the other side of the picture, where each member of the artisans' families had some sort of economic share in the craft organisation.

The beginning of such *karkhanas* is not very old and in no case, does it go beyond 150 years i.e. when the turbulence in the Mughal seat of rule was felt for the first time. The historic account of the family of Gul Mohammad shows that their ancestor who was the founder of this domestic *karkhana* worked during the time of Bahadur Shah Zafar Khan.

The process was slow but regular. The shifting of the *karkhanas* to the residential premises caused direct interaction between the economic and social spheres of the *zardoz* community where men and women stood on similar economic foundations.[20] From the socio-economic point of view, this was a remarkable breakthrough where the women involved in the non-economic household task, became co-sharers of the pattern of household economy. The activities that began in the domestic *karkhanas* are to be understood in terms of the changed situation in the changed collective values. The entrance of the women in the craft both socially and economically became legitimized. But this could not be ascertained through the literary sources, as our records state about participation of father and son in the court *karkhanas* only. Indeed till the introduction of the domestic *karkhanas* the woman's participation in the production of craft was almost nil. The producer and consumer relationship as it operated within the economic framework of the court was male-oriented.[21]

But the growing participation of women in the *zardozi* craft brought a sea-change in the socio-economic structure. My field of study among the *zardoz* throws interesting light on this issue. In one case at least it has been observed that the functioning of the *karkhana* is operated entirely by the female members of the family. A few records regarding items produced in the domestic *karkhanas* may not be out of context. It is found that the restriction of space in the domestic *karkhanas* at times dictates the sizes of the objects. The availability of the space of *karchob* in a particular work is in reality the determining factor of the objects to be produced there.

Since the observations and the analysis of the organisation of the *karkhanas* as described in this chapter are based entirely on the field investigations, it is necessary to discuss the field situation. Out of the total 150 households studied in the field, 130 households were found to have domestic *karkhanas*. The remaining 20 households owned commercial *karkhanas*.

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Organisation of Domestic Karkhanas

The organisational pattern of the domestic *karkhanas* existing today can broadly be divided into 3 main groups, which is based upon the classification adopted in the chapter on social organisation:

i. Core Group:	Where all the members of the households are engaged in the craft within the domestic *karkhana* system.
ii. Intermediary Group:	Category (1) where only women and children are engaged in the craft, men engaged in other occupations.
iii. Intermediary Group:	Category (2) where women and children are engaged in the craft at the residence and men are engaged in the craft elsewhere in commercial *karkhana*.

Of the 130 households having domestic *karkhana*, 80 belong to category (i), 40 belong to category (ii) and 10 belong to category (iii). During the survey it was found that most of these households are mainly engaged in the manufacture of the small items like badges, belts, purses, banners etc. The same group of artisans used to embroider caps, fans, *chunris* etc. during the pre-independence days.

The point which seems to have a direct relevance to the economics of the *karkhanas*, is the procurement of the orders. One can see that it is virtually two-way interactions; in some cases the orders are brought through agents or dealers. But generally the senior male member of the household takes the responsibility of bringing orders and distributing them to the other *karkhanas*, belonging to his own kin. It is almost a moral and economic responsibility of the seniormost member to procure order. An interesting point occurred to me when I took the interview; I found that the person involved in arranging orders kept some sort of secrecy about the place of procurement. He did not even want to divulge it to his own sons initially as he wants to have a full control over the source of income. In this connection I refer to one of the interviewers named Bashir Ahmad. Under all circumstances, domestic *karkhanas* show much coordination, cooperation and coherence. Strict convention is followed by distributing orders among the members of the families in the *haveli*. He, as the head of a family unit, used to procure orders for his, and his sons' workshops. But very soon friction arose on the demand of procuring orders in individual capacity by one of his sons. The son, an ambitious person, in course of time discovered his own source and thus established a separate economic unit. The salient economic fact is that as long as the sons depend on fathers for procurement of orders, economically they are controlled by their fathers. Let us take a specific example. Bashir Ahmad got an order for producing 20,000 badges in two months. He first made one badge and calculated how much time is required for making a badge. The rate then was fixed varying from Rs. 2 to Rs. 15 per piece depending on the fineness of the work. After calculating his margin Bashir distributed the work. If there is some discre-

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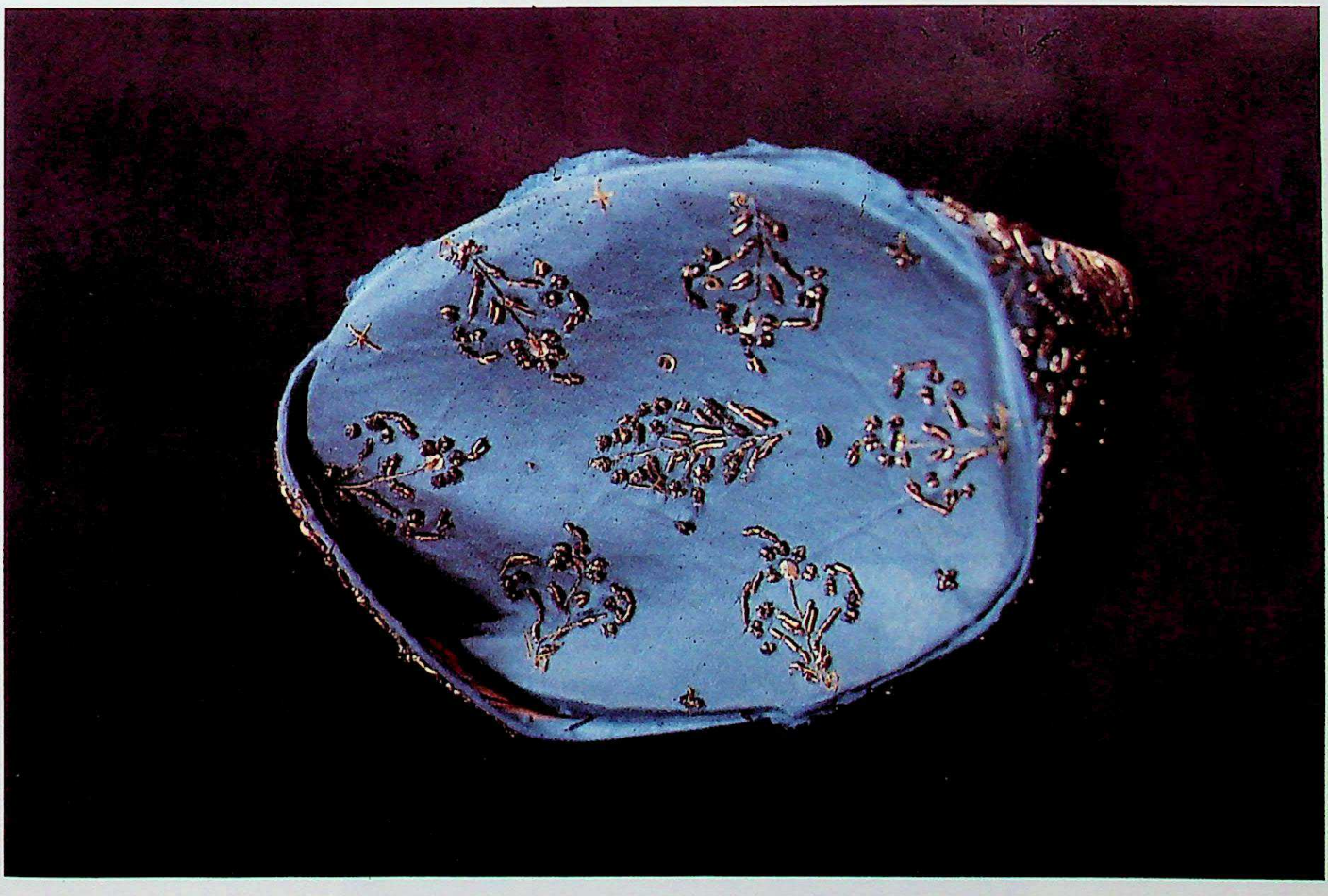
124. Turban.

125. *Topi,* the circular cap.



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126. *Mandel,* the circular cap.

127. *Topi.*

128. *Mandel,* highly ornated cap.

129. *Mandel.*

133. *Juti.*

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132. Detail of No. 5.

134. Curtain.

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136. Detail of the central panel of No. 135.

137. Meghnath — Ravana's son, red puppet. →

138. Raja Bhoj, the rod puppet of prominent king.

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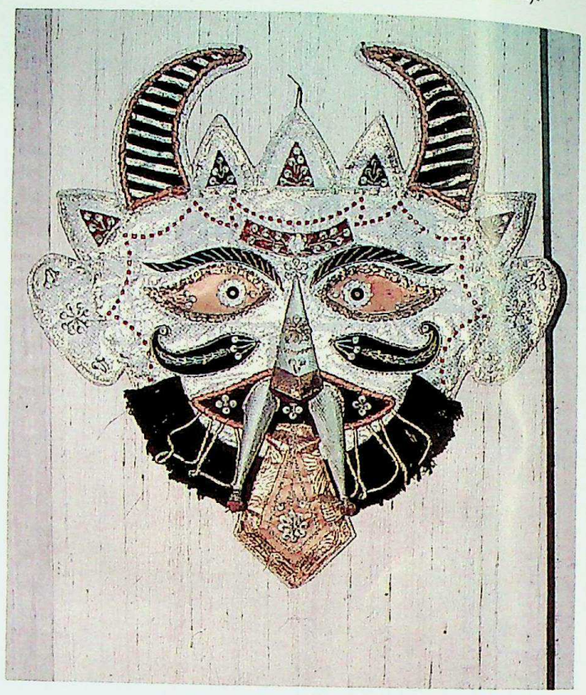
←139. Costume worn by Kumbhakarna for Chhau *nach*.

141. Ravana. (Below)

140. *Asur,* the ferocious nature of the character has been admirably expressed in the *zari* work (mask).



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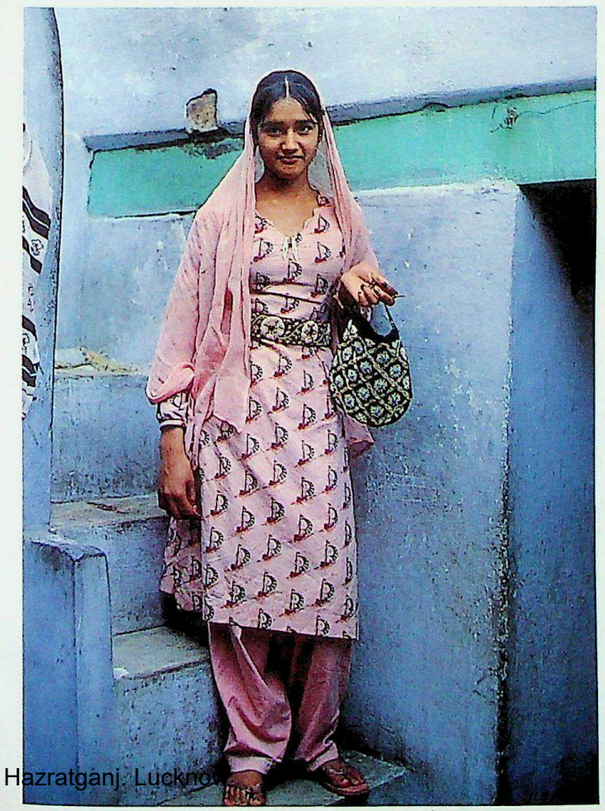
143. Purses with *meenakari* work.

144. *Zardoz* girl posing to show the fashion accessories.

146. *Pankha.*



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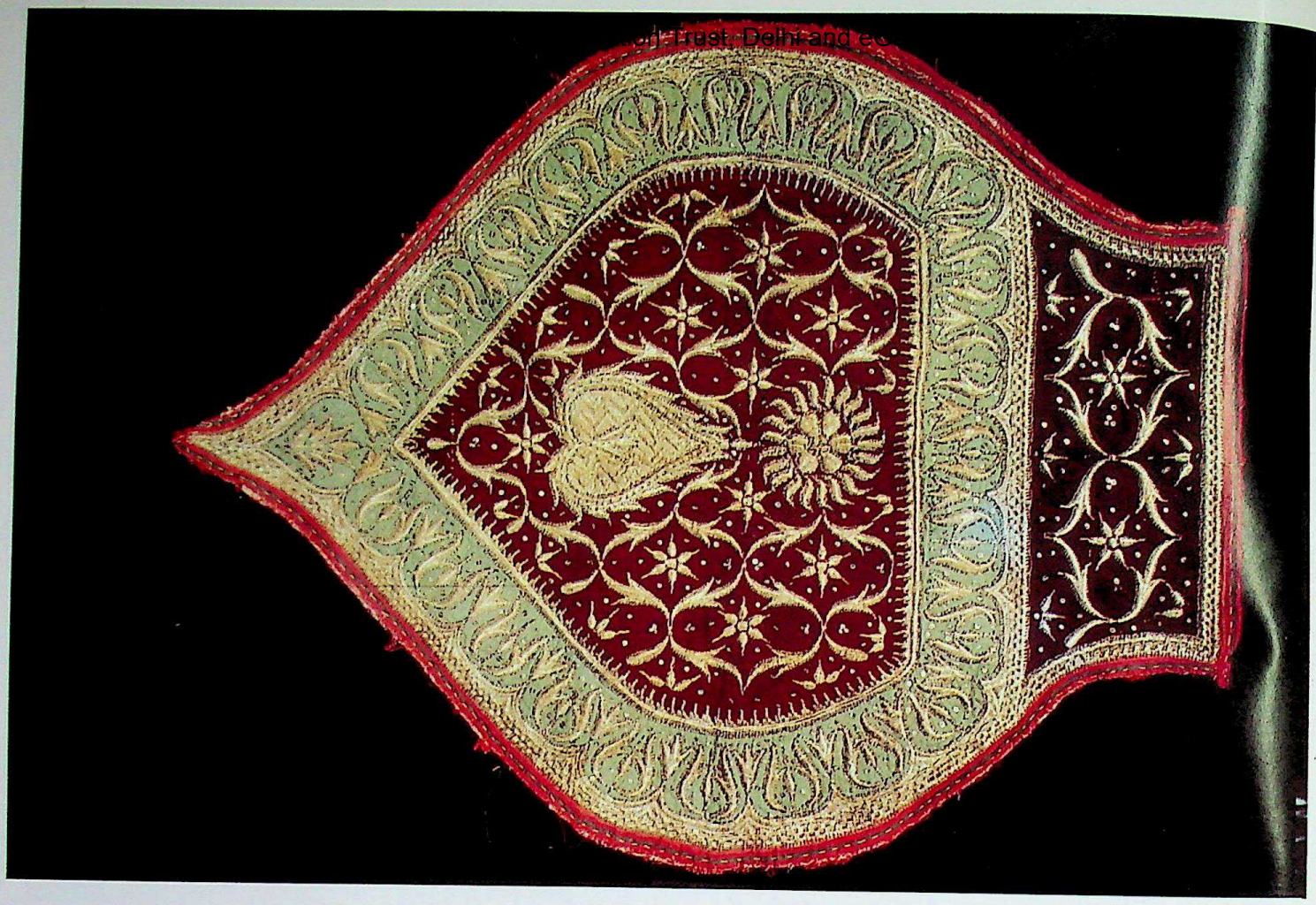

148. *Pankha.*

157. Fashion accessories like bangles, studs, hair clips etc.

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pancy regarding the wages, it is settled before taking up the work. All the families then work individually in their own domestic *karkhanas*. Although there may be some variation in the number of pieces given to each family or the individuals (depending upon their capacity of manufacture), there is never any variation in payment after fixing the price.

The most important point noticeable in the domestic *karkhana* is that unlike the state-owned *karkhana* where the individual craftsperson had to work under the pressure either of the patrons or of the chief *karigars*, the craftspersons in the domestic *karkhanas* seem to enjoy more freedom. They are not interfered with in their day to day production or work even by the *karkhanedars* who distribute orders.[22]

The decline of Mughal rule and consequent disappearance of the imperial workshops resulted in the emergence of the commercial *karkhanas*. The system of such production centres may be slightly older, as in the Ain-i-Akbari we find indirect references to production centres — stating that the materials were produced elsewhere.[23] Dispersal of the *zardozi* craft to the provincial courts (some were Hindu courts) further helped the growth of such *karkhanas*. Indeed, from the evidence, it is clear that this was the time when not only the court, but even the Hindu elite became popular patrons of such work. Commercial *karkhanas*, as the name indicates, are the big business production centres. These *karkhanas* are patronised by the individual financier who is professionally a *zardoz*, but does not always practise the craft. It is interesting to notice that though two *karkhana* systems—the commercial and the domestic—grew up together and work simultaneously, from the point of view of structure, and in their functional aspect, the two differ tremendously from each other.

Unlike the court *karkhanas* which were essentially centrally controlled, these commercial *karkhanas* are owned by individual *karkhanedars*. Structurally there are certain basic similarities in these two systems. Both the systems are male-oriented, and hence impose taboos on the women participation in the production.

While studying the organizational aspect of the commercial *karkhanas* we find in our field data the existence of two systems of the unit:

1. The commercial *karkhanas* owned by the *zardoz*
2. The commercial *karkhanas* owned by the non-*zardoz*.

The first category of the commercial *karkhanas* owned by the *zardoz* are virtually the extension of the court *karkhanas*.[24] These *karkhanas* located in large halls are situated in the main *bazars*. Various types of objects are embroidered in these centres, catering to the needs of the urban and export market. The requirements of the objects are a peculiar mixture, and hence the objects produced in these *karkhanas* at times deviated much from the original *zardozi* work. One would notice that these workshops manufacture objects more in *hath ari* work than in pure *zardozi*. Since the work done with *hath ari* is quicker and easier, a large number of non-*zardozi* migrant-*karigars* are employed there.

In order to trace out an accurate picture of a commercial *karkhana* let us go back to our field data. One such *karkhana* is owned by Mohd. Maqbul Khan

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who had come to Delhi after the abolition of the provincial court of Patiala, where he had migrated after the fall of the Mughal empire. On coming back to Delhi Mohd. Maqbul Khan did not try to establish any domestic *karkhana*, instead he took up a place in the market, and hired some craftspersons in order to establish a commercial *karkhana*. Establishment of such *karkhana* required a good amount of finance. Maqbul Khan recalled that during that time the women in his family never worked on the craft, but used to go to school and college. As a matter of fact, two of his sisters were employed in schools as teachers. Initially Maqbul Khan himself used to sit on the *karchob*, but slowly as his production centre became popular and his capacity to hire craft labour increased, he ceased to be a *karigar*. But he has technical expertise in embroidery. During my field-work the most important fact that struck me was that most of the *zardoz* owners of the commercial *karkhanas* seem to have come from the common stock. On collecting the genealogies of such families, it has been observed that establishment of *karkhana* was done by individual ventures.

The organisation of the commercial *karkhanas* is almost like an ordinary manufacturing centre, where the work starts in the morning and ends in the evening or late night. The craftsmen basically belong to two categories, firstly, *karigar* conversant with the traditional *zardozi* craft is recruited from a domestic *karkhana*. He lives in his own house and is paid a monthly salary of Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,500 depending on the quality of his work. In the second, fall the migrant craftsmen who stay in the workshops and work till late night. Apprentice craftsmen also get attached to such *karkhanas*.

The working hours may increase if there is a rush of work. The payments vary from person to person ranging from Rs. 40 to Rs. 45 per day. These persons are paid weekly based on daily wages. Extra payments are made for the late sitting. The main role of the *karkhana* owner is to get the work-orders, distribute the work among the craftsmen and also watch progress of the work. The designs which are drawn by the owner are kept by the owner himself and rarely does he give an opportunity to the workers to keep the designs. The owner negotiates with the buyer. The workers are not concerned at all about the sale-price of a particular embroidered piece.

The commercial *karkhanas* belonging to category (2) i.e. the ones owned by non-*zardoz* persons are mainly the *karkhanas* belonging to large export houses like Ivory Mart, Ivory Palace etc. In these *karkhanas*, work on several handicrafts is carried on simultaneously and skilled craftsmen from each of the craft are hired on a daily wage basis. These exporters obtain orders for the fine craftsmanship from foreigners and fulfil these orders by directly supervising the work. Although these commercial *karkhanas* are not exclusively for *zardozi*, they made a very useful contribution in the perpetuation and sustenance of the specialised skill of the craftsmen.[25]

Zardozi as a craft cannot be practised individually, as the skill of the craft requires group work. Thus group activity forms a very important aspect in the work. We have so far discussed three systems of production-organization, showing gradual growth, sustenance and deterioration of the craft.

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The conclusion which emerges from our analysis is that the institution of craft production, which started on the single note of the *tiraz* factory under the Sultanate period and was practised strictly in the royal workshop, slowly penetrated among the nobility of the courts and by the time of the Mughals was firmly established in India; it was merged in the system. The patronage of the craft increased as apart from the king and queen, the other nobles and ministers of the court were given the privilege of adorning their personal attire in the current fashion with jewels and rich embroidery. This increased patronage encouraged the production of the *zardozi* items at various levels within the court itself and also at several places outside the court. Once the manufacture of such ostentatious items spread outside the imperial court, the rich and influential members of the society started indulging freely in such luxury. This led to the emergence of the commercial *karkhanas* along with the royal *karkhanas*. With the coming of the British to the Indian sub-continent the privileges of the royal courts were slowly withdrawn. But these foreign rulers were nevertheless charmed by the glorious manifestations of gold, silver and precious stones laid on cloth and leather in resplendent harmony. Soon the humble craftsmen were conditioning themselves to the European tastes of enamelled embroidery where silk and gold threads adorned several items of dress, coverlets, small presentation items, etc. This brought in slow but definite changes of patronisation. The royal among the court artisans sought patronage at the provincial courts, whereas others diverted to the already existing commercial *karkhanas*. The craft had by now penetrated the urban market and a new category of work production organisation emerged, where the craftsmen, instead of working for any commercial *karkhana*, chose to open their own workshops at their domestic quarters. They were ready to accept orders either small or large for their sustenance, but were reluctant to take another occupation. Soon, in addition to the richest people, the upper middle class of society started indulging in frivolous expenses of dresses with gold and silver embroidery, at least at the time of marriages. The popularity of such costumes was so great that at least one pair of *lahenga-chunri*, caps or jumpers is still found in almost every rich house in U.P. The craft found new outlets of dispersal but another political upheaval debased the craftsmen working in the provincial courts. These craftsmen again returned to their native locale i.e. Delhi and joined hands with the already existing work force of domestic *karkhanas* and the commercial *karkhanas*.

With the complete disappearance of royal patronage, new market channels emerged both inland and abroad in the form of banners, insignias, badges, small gift items. These were produced at the domestic *karkhanas* whereas dresses, etc. were continued to be embroidered at commercial *karkhanas*.

The existence of duality in the field situation reflects the orthodox and non-orthodox social system. The prevailing system of economic organisation is an outgrowth of the traditional system of court *karkhanas*. This change however has manifestedly influenced the social rationality of a section of the *zardoz* community.

Viewing *zardoz* as a crafts community, it may be added that the craft predominates as a distinct social identity in the economic organisational

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structures and sustains itself through adaptation in the form of a variety of structured units of production over the historical vicissitudes. Presently this is vividly reflected in the continuation of the traditional production system in three different forms, namely, domestic *karkhana*, *zardoz*-owned commercial *karkhana* and non-*zardoz*-owned commercial *karkhana* emerging due to changed economic-political settings over a period of history.

Economically, *zardozi* work is a segment of the complete urban market system which is connected with buyer-seller relationships. Their very mode of earning livelihood i.e. using embroidery craft as a means of earning money is an important aspect of this system. Any material that the *zardoz* uses for production is bought from the market in exchange for money or service. But what is noticeable is that though production is dependent on the requirement of the contemporary market, their work organisation and technology are found to have been conditioned primarily by their traditional economic system. Indeed their entire work system is basically tied up with their community organisation.

To sum up, we may say that in terms of the organisation of their socio-economic system, a large section has a simple labour intensive technology based on a household division of labour, an informal work organisation which is largely bounded by social system. The last named is characterized by group endogamy, economic cooperation and informal sanctions, which are integrated deeply within their organisation of work, especially in the systems prevailing in the domestic *karkhanas*. In the other section i.e. in the commercial *karkhanas* it has no basic difference since here too one finds occurrence of the same system of formal work organisation and labour intensive technology emerging from a formal division of loosely bounded social system though in a slightly superior labour. These contrasting influences prevalent within the same craft technique are undoubtedly the resultant effects of the use of simple technology for meeting the urban market demand (at an affordable price). Production and exchanges thus play crucial role in the perpetuation of traditional craft, at times in a changed situation.

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149. Jain miniature painting showing religious symbols.

↓ 150. *Pothi pitari.*

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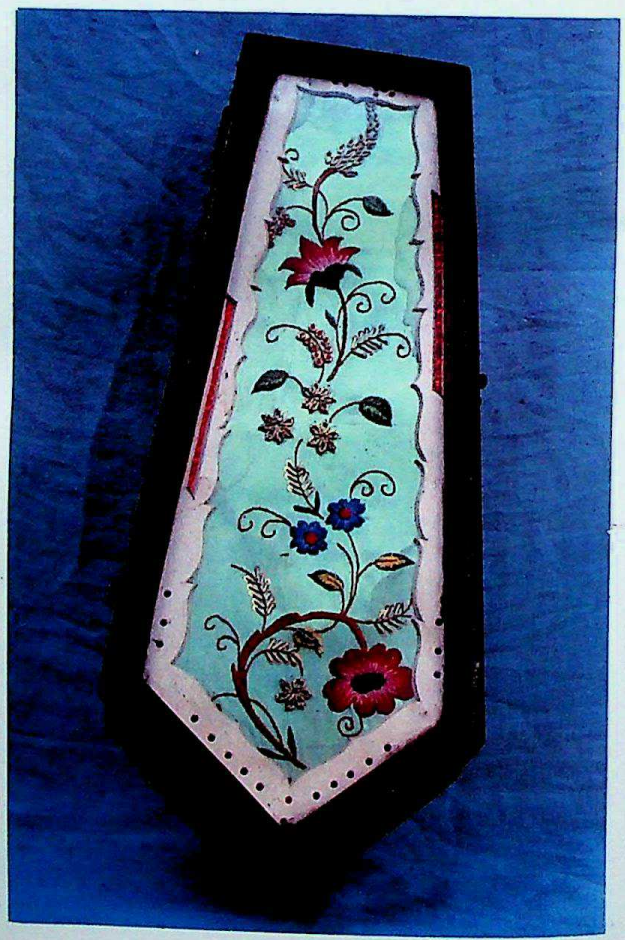

153. *Tugra*, velvet with Allahu embroidered in *zardozi*.

156. Tie case, satin silk, *zari*.

151. *Gomukhi*. (Above)

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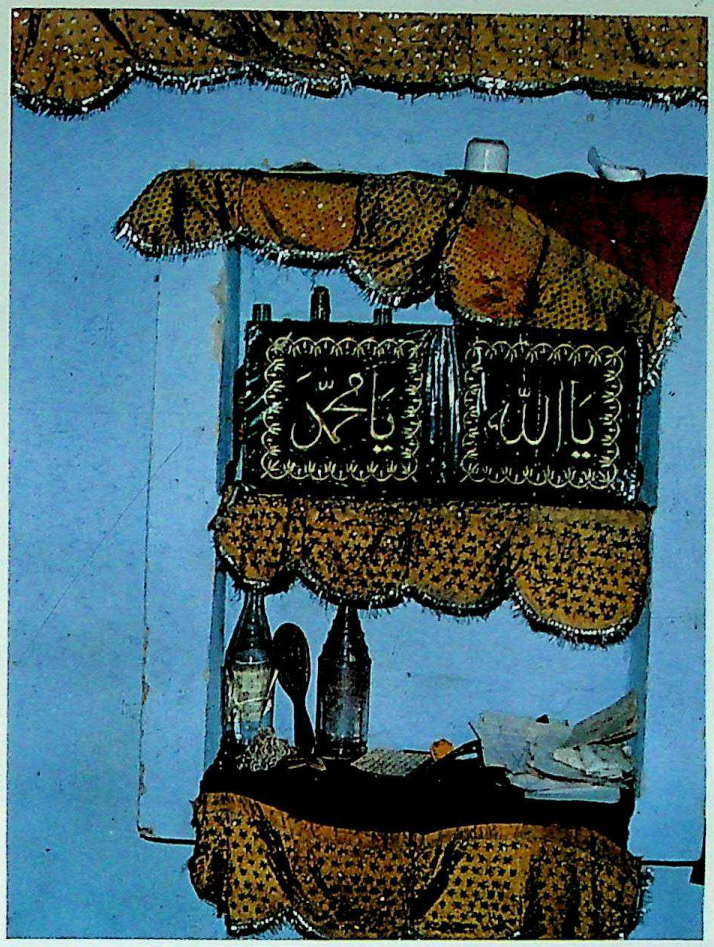

152. The *tugra* placed in a niche in *zardoz* household.

154. An *ayat* from Kuran, the religious text.

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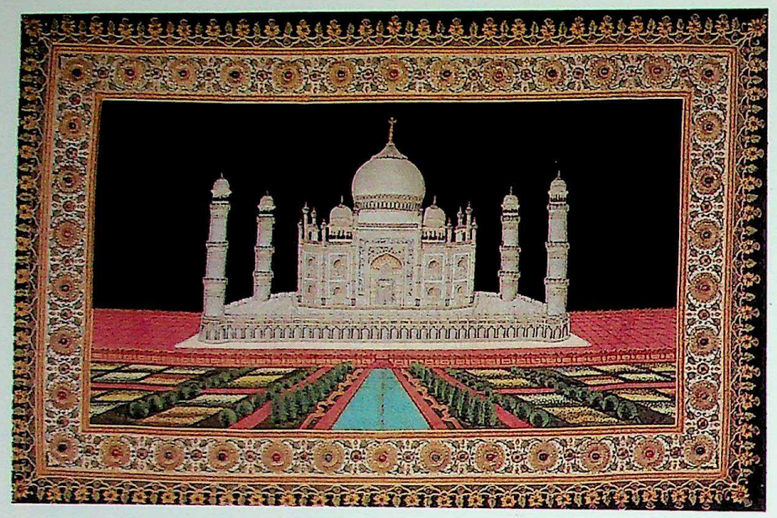
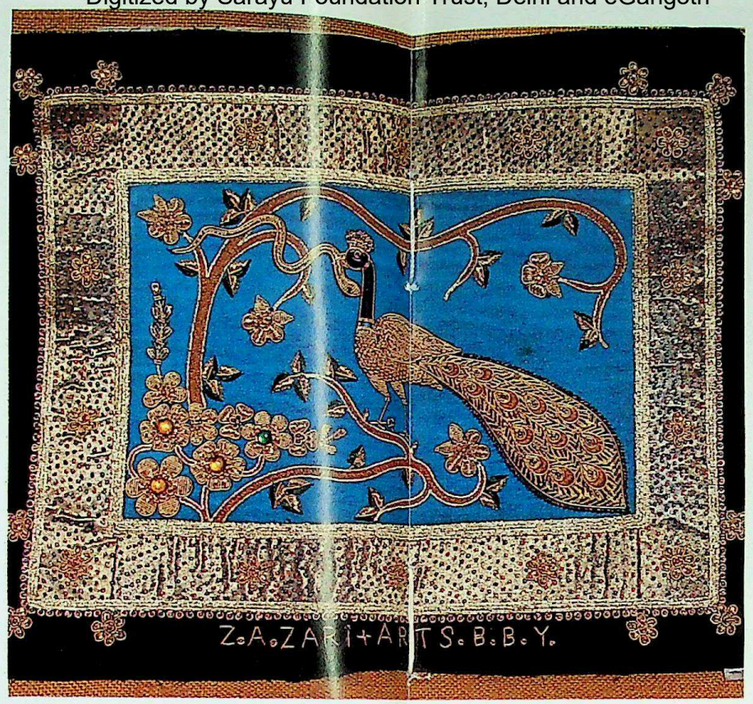


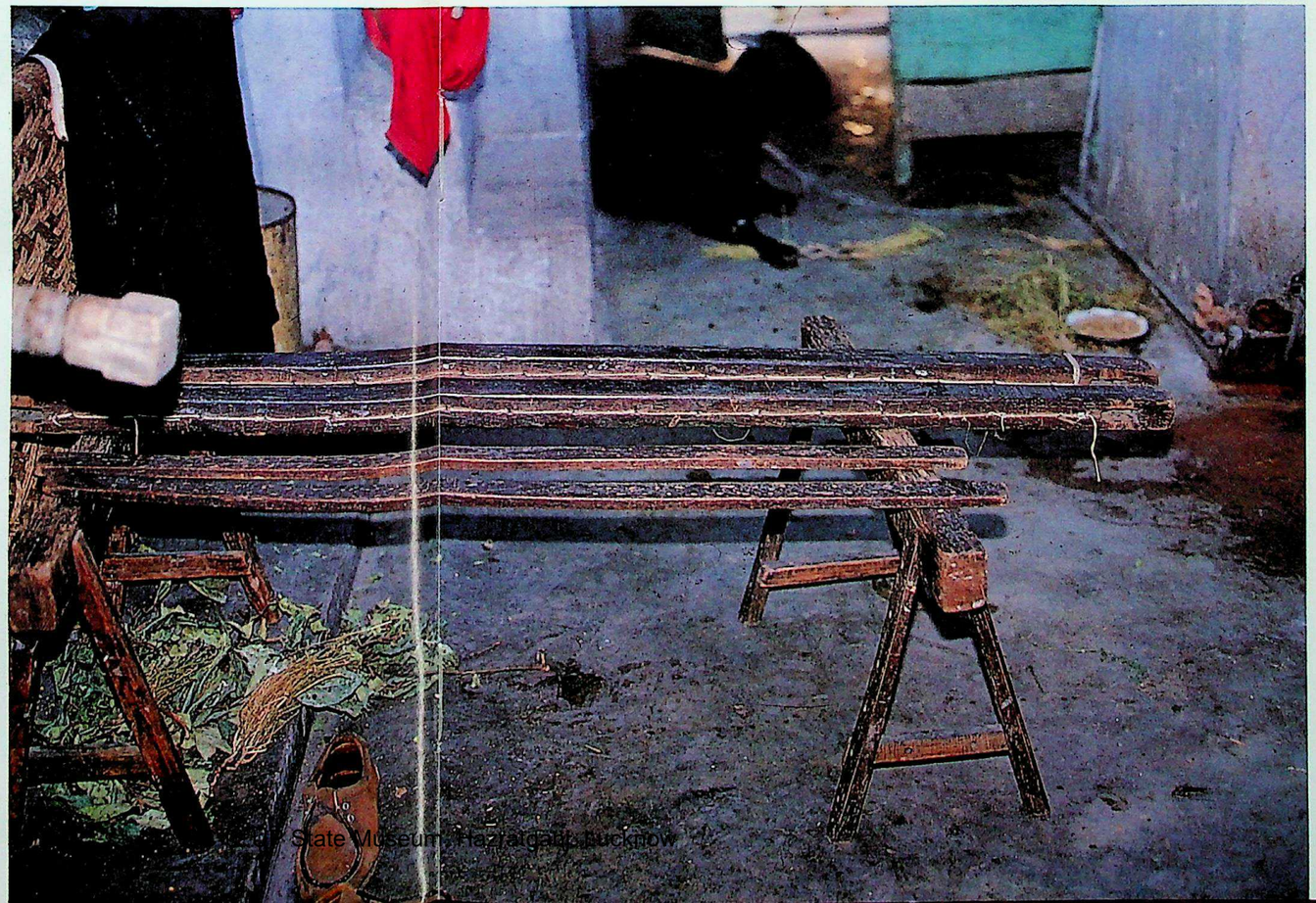
159. Taj with silver wire on velvet.



161. Panel scenery shows a peacock amidst the foliage.

166. Various varieties of metallic wire.

162. A miniature folio showing the process of gold melting. Patiala school of painting.



167. *Karchob* placed on *tipai*.

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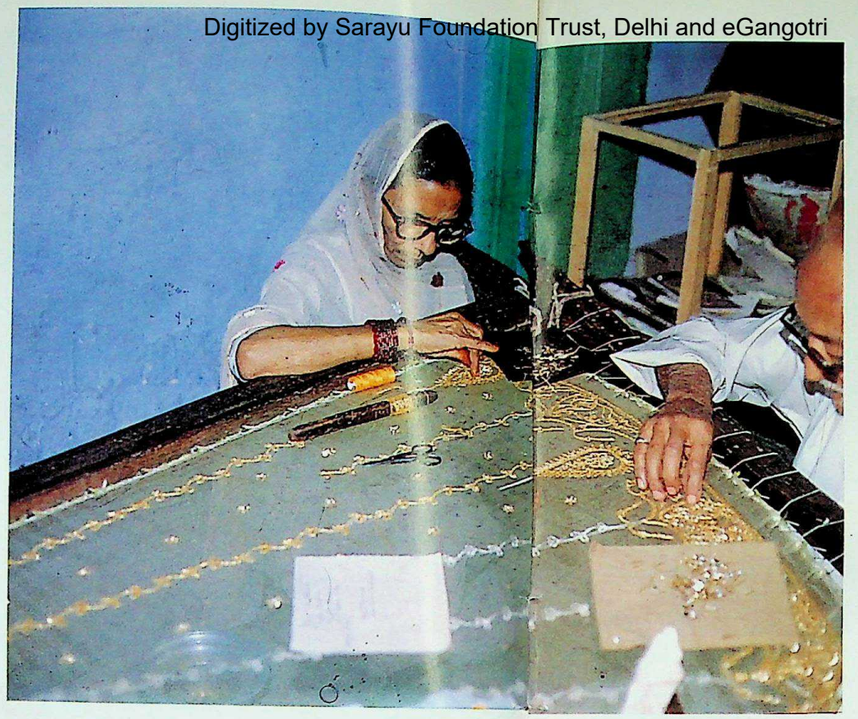
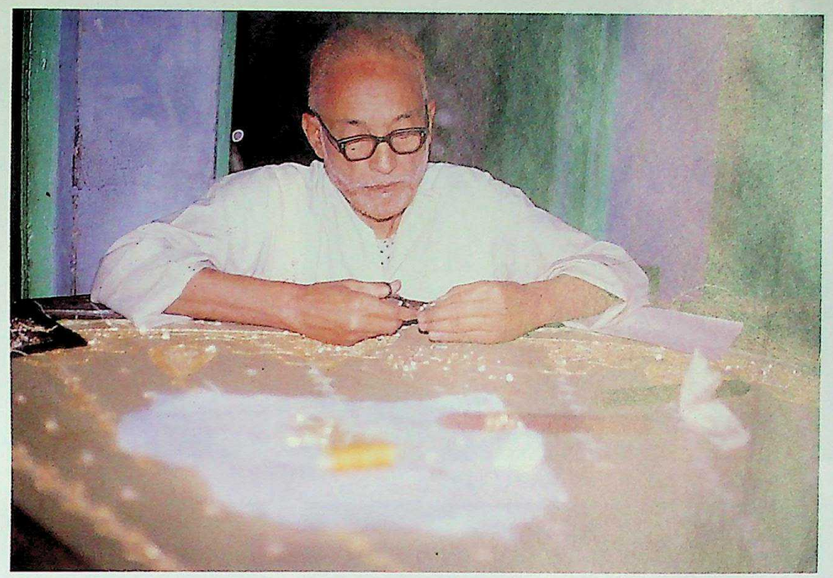
←168. *Shamsharak* and *farad* when not in use.



173. Mohd. Farid and his wife working on *adda.*



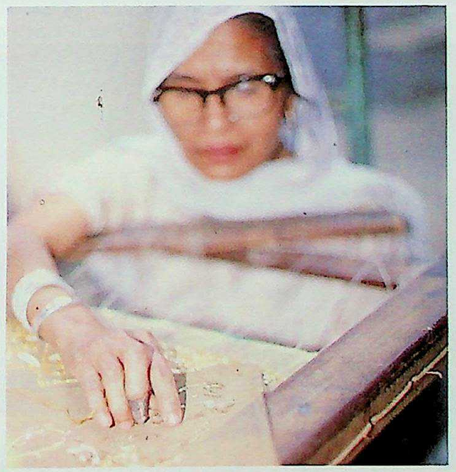
176. Cutting the metallic wire in smaller pieces.

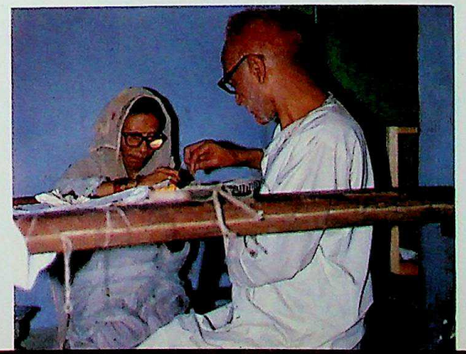
174. Mohd. Farid, the *zardoz,* is seen picking up the *zari* wire in the needle.

178. Another view.

175. *Zardoz* woman picking up wire.

172. Detail of *vasli ka kam.*





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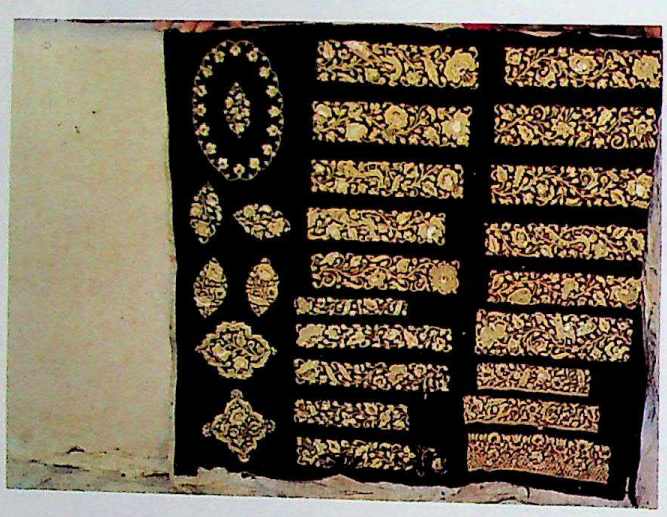

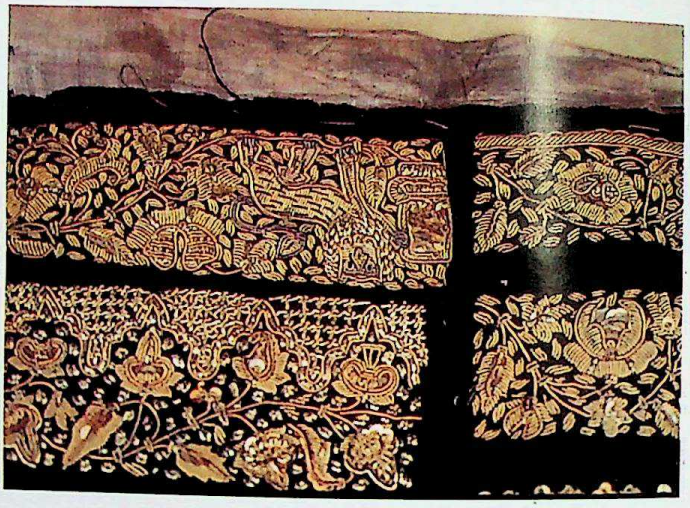

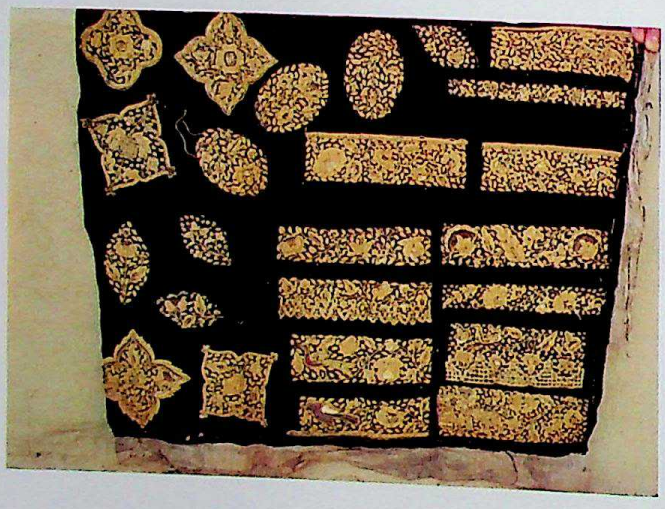

177. Position of craftsperson while working.

179. Range of *buta* and *bel* designs.

180(a). Range of *buta* and *bel* designs.

186. *Zardoz* girl learning basics of the craft.

181. *Gamla batua* designs.

180. Range of *buta* and *bel* designs.

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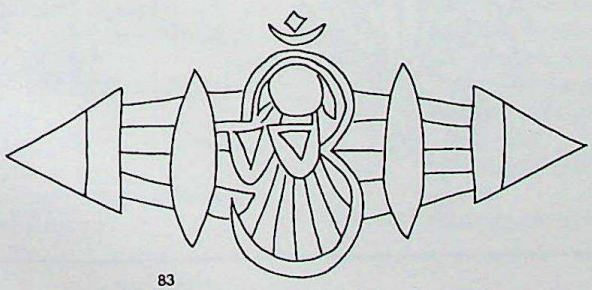
Footnotes

1. S.M.A. Rizvi defines *karkhana* as a workshop for manufacturing machinery or spare parts of machinery, in which not less than two and not more than thirty-five persons may be employed. Rizvi has evolved this definition while studying another section of Muslim community existing in Delhi, who are engaged in manufacture of the machinery or the spare parts thereof. Reference to Rizvi's study is important, since as discussed in the preceding chapter, the *zardoz* menfolk adopt this as the main alternate profession. Factually a *karkhana* is any workshop/factory where more than two and less than thirty-five persons are engaged in the manufacture of any goods or item. *Karkhana* is a very commonly used word in the Muslim community. Generally the nomenclature refers to the type of goods manufactured viz. *karkhana* where *zardozi* craft is practised is called *zardozi karkhana*. *Karkhana* is derived from two Persian words—*kar* to work and *khana/khuna* is house or place. It also means as *khune*, home, *khune man*, my home. So it could be evolved from the concept of cottage industry, a combined living and working place. Later it developed into a name for a work place, based on discussion with Jasleen Dhamija.
2. *Karkhana* is not formal organization. The organization of a *karkhana* entails overlapping of roles on the part of its members.
   Barth, F., 1959; Blau, P., 1974; Scott, W.R., 1962; Etizioni, A., 1965; Rizvi, S.M.A., 1981, have studied informal work organizations in other communities.
3. Quluqshandi has described the state factories of Tughlak where makers of embroideries (*zarakisha*) and masters of other crafts are mentioned. Subh-al-Asha, 1913, V. 83 and 84; *zarkasha* is defined as gold silver embroidery. Wehr, H., 1979, p. 437.
4. Serjeant, R.B., 1946, p. 136.
5. Barani, Z., 1888-91, p. 493.
6. Op. cit., p. 136.
7. Quluqshandi, op. cit.
8. Ibn Fadl Allah, Tr. by Spies, p. 40.
9. Serjeant, R.B., 1946, p. 136.
10. Ain-i-Akbari, pp. 93-94.
11. Ackermann, P., 1939, pp. 1995-2102.
12. Ain-i-Akbari, p. 97.
13. Bernier, F., 1968, p. 259.
14. Athar Ali, 1966.
15. Bernier, F., 1968, p. 254.
16. Athar Ali, 1966, pp. 157-158.
17. Bernier, 1968, p. 259.
18. The noble ladies were the designers who were in constant competition with one another. Noorjehan the Mughal queen was the principal promoter of this direct influence on the craftsmen in Mughal court.
19. A socio-economic survey of zari workers, conducted by the Indian Conference on Social Work mentions *zardozi karkhanas* existing in Delhi, 1960, p. 24.
20. Also see Survey of Zari Workers, study sponsored by Gandhi Peace Foundation (Unpublished), pp. 3-13.
21. Jayakar, Pupul, 1980, p. 17.
22. Anthropologically speaking domestic *karkhana* represents the informal sector. Dorothy, R., 1982, p. 235.
23. Ain-i-Akbari, p. 98.
24. Handicraft Artisans in Delhi, 1960, p. 24.
25. As against the informal sector domestic *karkhanas* the commercial *karkhanas* represent organisation of the formal sector, cf. Dorothy, R., 1982, p. 235.



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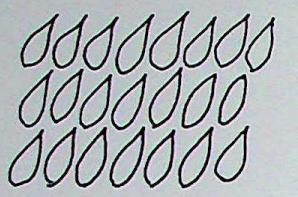

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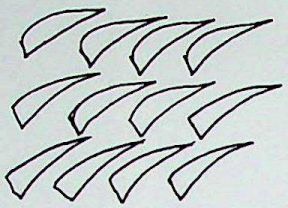

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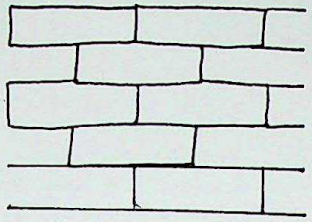

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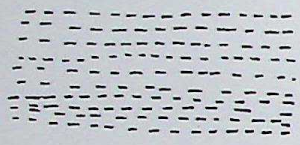

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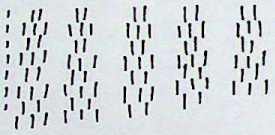

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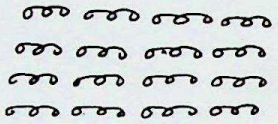

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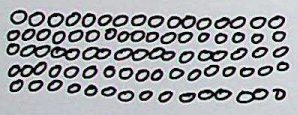

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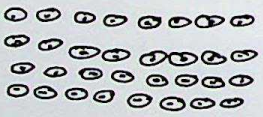

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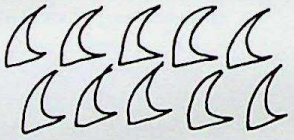

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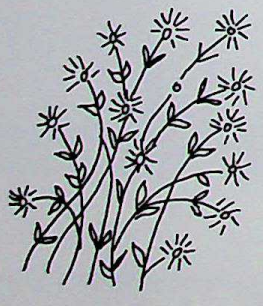

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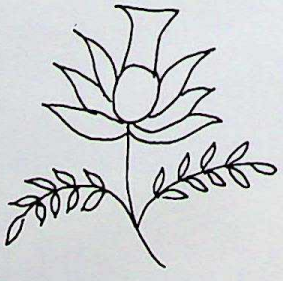

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GLOSSARY

Abrawan Silk muslin with some portions designed in gold or silver thread.

Achakan A long coat upto the knees with high collar worn by men.

Adda Synonym of *karchob.*

Ajaibi Kind of tent structure, referred to by Abul Fazl.

Amir The rich.

Amru Brocade without gold and silver threads.

Ansari A caste-like sub-group among Muslims.

Antariya An inner garment.

Apajan Sister-like elderly lady among Muslims.

Ari A small crocket hook like needle.

Ariwala Craftsman who works with *ari.*

Asan A small floor spread, may be square or circular.

Asmangir The large cloth tent used as a ceiling.

Atka Kind of sewn garment worn in Vedic age.

Badla A thick variety of flattened metallic wire.

Bafta Closely-woven silk fabric with all over or partly gold or silver thread patterns used specially for garments.

Barani A garment.

Basti Metal embroidery on silk base.

Batua Purse.

Bazuband Ornament band for arm.

Biradari A close-knit cluster identifying itself with a sub-caste or caste-like group.

Borgal Russian leather.

Bukram Stiff cotton used for lining while couching.

Camut Russian leather.

Chadar A cloth worn as wrapper.

Chakri Round *zari* with hole in the centre.

Chalak Type of *zari* motif for highlighting design.

Charpai Indian bed with four legs, woven surface.

Chaubagla A loose men's upper garment with four arm cuts.

Chauri Whisk.

Chatar Parasol — small sun screen.

Chhau nach Ritual dance staging episodes from epics.

Chikna A coiled wire with lustrous shine.

Chogas A loose-fitted long coat for men, used as a court dress.

Chopad An indoor sedentary game.

Chowk The internal courtyard in house.

Chubin Tent structure pertaining to Mughal period.

Chunri Fabric usually three metres long and one and half metres wide. It is worn with *lahenga,* the long skirt and *choli,* the blouse. It covers head and shoulders.

Choli Blouse.

Dabka A coiled thin wire.

Dahleez A passage at the entrance of the house leading to the inner courtyard.

Darbar Court of the king.

Dastar-khan Cloth which is spread while serving the meals, among the Muslims.

Doashi-yana Manzil A kind of tent structure having two stories.

Dodi Bud.

Dokh Couching technique using cotton thread.

Dushala Shawl worn by men.

Dupatta Fabric used as head cover by women.

Farad Two vertical beams of *karchob.*

Farshi Floor spread.

Fatila Small wooden tool used for wrapping *zari.*

Futa A napkin or a head cover made of silk embroidered with gold.

Ghaghra Flared ankle-length skirt.

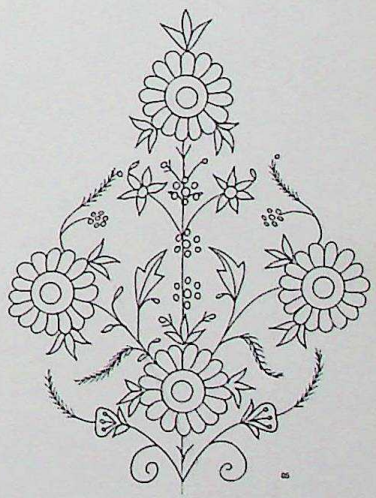
Ghasia Saddle cover studded with gold and precious stones.

Ghatta Indigenous name of satinette.

Gijai A circular thin stiff wire used for embroidery.

Hakim Medicinal healer under Unani system.

Hath ari Same as *ari,* since it is used by



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hand it is generally called by this name.

Haveli Large residential complex with a number of smaller dwellings around a central courtyard.

Hindola Swing with broad comfortable seat.

Ibadat Offering of prayers.

Ikhrajat Wasteful.

Itlakat Gift.

Jagirdar Owner of land-holdings.

Jamat A sub-group of a community.

Jaminposh Floor cover.

Janamaz A mat spread by Muslims while offering prayers.

Japanitar A variety of polypropyline wire, popularly used in embroidery in recent times.

Jorabapha A kind of brocade.

Jhul Caparison for elephants.

Jhutha kam Embroidery done with imitation copper wire.

Jhutha tar Copper wire gilded with gold or silver.

Julahe Weavers.

Jutis Traditional Indian footwear.

Kachcha resham Untwisted or floss silk.

Kada A bracelet.

Kadai Embroidery.

Kalabatoon Silk thread braided with *zari* thread.

Kala kam Work of manufacturing iron tools.

Kamar-band Belt.

Kamdani Embroidery done on muslin silk and other fine materials, with silver and gold wire.

Kanak-patra Gold-leaf design on silk.

Kangri Type of *zari* motif for highlight design.

Kanat Kind of tent.

Kantha Traditional folk embroidery of Bengal.

Kanchali Bodice or under-bodice.

Karan A flower.

Kararang Leather buckles.

Karchikan Fine metal embroidery done on silk or muslin.

Karchob Zari embroidery frame on which cloth is stretched.

Karchobi Zari embroidery done on velvet or heavy satin.

Karigar Wage workers.

Karkhana Production workshop.

Karkha-nedars Owners of the *karkhanas*.

Karma-dans Sanskritised form of *kamaishi*.

Kasida Embroidery.

Kasuti Traditional folk embroidery from Karnataka.

Kaum A community, section or group.

Khairat Charity.

Khairu Indian flower.

Khakas The blueprints.

Khalifa A group leader.

Khanposh Cloth spread out for meals.

Khichcha A coiled wire.

Khilla These are more or less square shawls or half shawls.

Khese Gape bunch.

Kinkhab Name given to brocaded fabrics with large percentage of gold and silver wire interwoven.

Kora A coiled wire with less lustre.

Kulan Turban.

Kusuma dana Shoes embroidered with gold thread.

Lahenga Long skirt tied with a string on waist.

Lot Indian flower.

Madarsa A traditional Islamic school.

Maghrib A prayer time of Muslims.

Mahairibi Arch-like design.

Makhmal Velvet.

Markin Cheap cloth used for lining.

Mashru A kind of stuff woven of silk and cotton.

Masnad Small carpets.

Mehrab An arch.

Mukuts Crowns.

Mulmul-khas Varieties of muslin.

Muslin A finely woven cotton cloth.

Nakli kam Embroidery with chemically coloured copper wire.

Nakli tar Chemically coloured copper wire.

Nakshi Slightly thicker wire than *dabka*.

Nalki resham ki Silken thread used to stitch the *zari*.

Nalki sut ki Cotton thread used to stitch the thicket wire.

Namaz Prayer of Muslims.

Nasiz A kind of silken cloth with gold embroidery.

Nawab High-ranking official, often a governor.

Paigamber Messenger of God.

Palang posh Bed cover.

Pallu The end of the sari which is draped over the shoulder.

Pan Betel.

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Pandan A utensil to hold betels.
Pankhi Birds.
Pataniya From a place in Gujarat.
Patka A cloth tied around forehead or waist.
Patti Leaves.
Pattika A belt.
Pattu Neck band.
Phudadiya A rich silk stuff with jewel setting.
Phul Flowers.
Phulkari Folk embroidery from Punjab.
Plastic ka taga Plastic thread.
Pota An unembroidered garment.
Prota An embroidered or patterned cloth.
Purdah A veil or curtain.
Puthia Hangings behind Jain abbot.
Pyala Cup.
Qur A collection of flags, arms and other insignia.
Quran Holy book of Muslims.
Rangin tar Coloured wire.
Sachopa Gold embroidery.
Sachcha kam Embroidery work with gold or silver wire.
Sachcha tar Silver wire gilded with gold.
Sadi 6 metre long Indian female attire.
Safid Alchas A kind of corded stuff.
Sagon A kind of wood.
Salan Cooked vegetable with gravy.
Sona pana Gold-leaf design on silk.
Satbanteli The head veil worn by women of pastoral community of desert India.
Satinette A cloth made of mixed cotton and silk.
Sheracheb An enclosure of tents.
Shabnam A name given to certain muslins.
Shatir A type of wood.
Shamiana A tent.
Sham-sharak Two horizontal bars of *karchob*.
Sharara A kind of heavily flared pants worn by women.
Shawl A wrapper used both by men and women.
Sherwani A dress of men.
Shisham A type of hard wood.
Sinhal Desh Name of a part of ancient India.
Sitar Indian stringed musical instrument.
Sitara A small piece looking like a star.
Sivan A tent.
Sona gilat Copper electroplated with chemical gold.
Sonapalika Kanikarti A cloth worked on with rubies from the region Sonapali.
Sonasu-chika Gold embroidery.
Sone chandi ka tar Gold and silver wire.
Sravan Indian month when the first shower bathes the dry earth after hot spell.
Surajmukhi Sunflower.
Sut ki dori Thick cotton thread.
Suchisona Silk embroidered with gold.
Sunna Orally transmitted teachings.
Surahi An elongated pitcher with narrow neck and broad base.
Surat-i-sher The image of a lion.
Takiya Pillow.
Tanpura String instrument with 4 cords.
Tas A cloth having warp and weft in metal wire.
Thal A large circular plate.
Thalinuma Circular pattern.
Tikora A variety of spiral wire.
Tilla Flat wire.
Tipai A kind of stand with three legs.
Tiraz Embroidered border.
Toshkhana The state treasury.
Tugre A holy inscription of Muslims.
Turanj Corner motif.
Tush A material for shawls.
Uparla The upper part of shoe/*juti*.
Ustad A teacher.
Uttariya An upper garment.
Vina String musical instrument.
Zarakisha Makers of embroidery.
Zardozi Zari embroidery.
Zarkash A type of embroidery.
Zik Various types of decorative motifs in *zari* for highlighting designs.
Zinposh Saddle cloth.

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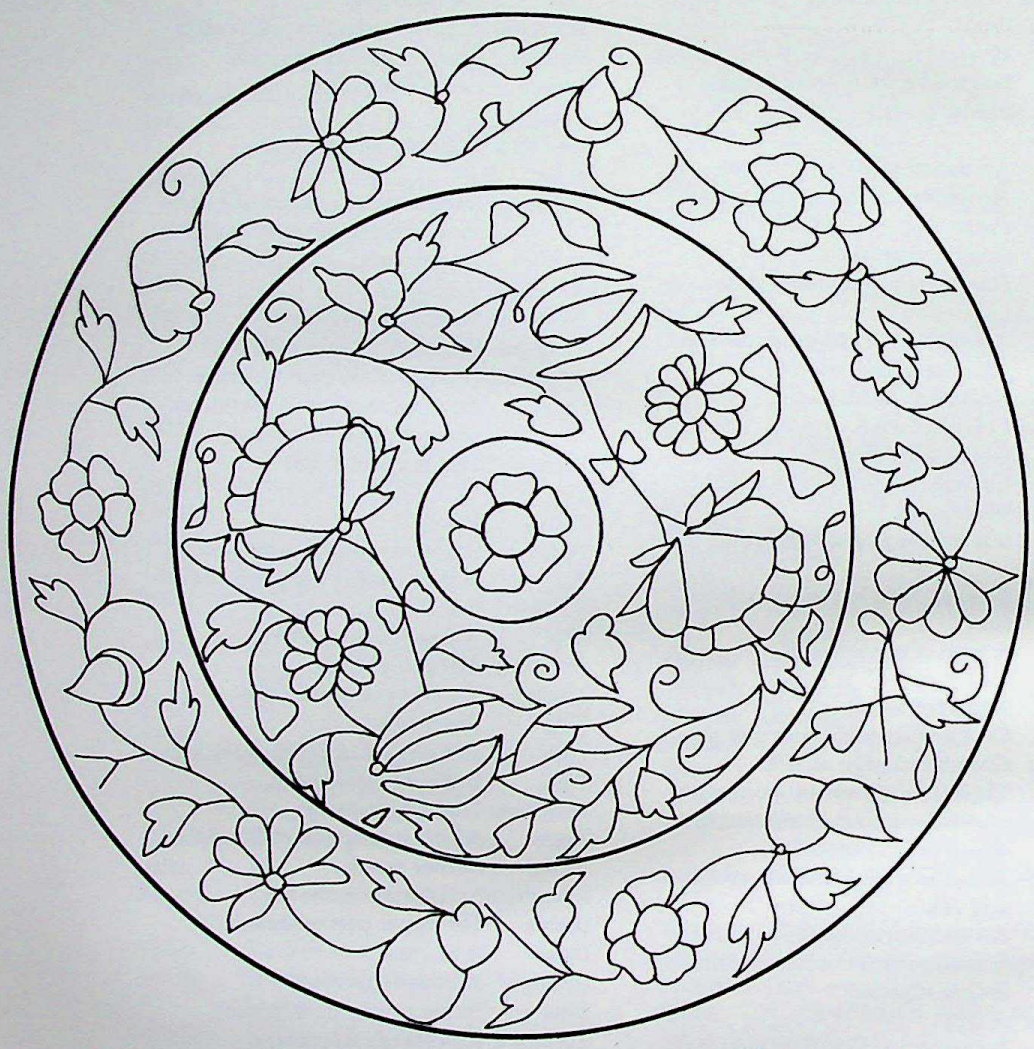

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2. *Uparla* of the *jutis*.

Dr. Charu Smita Gupta was attached to Research and Documentation Scheme of National Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi since 1976, and is presently working as Deputy Director, Museum Collection.

She holds a doctorate degree in Museology from Calcutta University and Master's degree in Social Anthropology from Delhi University. She writes regularly on different aspects of Indian arts and crafts.

Dr. Gupta is carrying on research and documentation of folk, tribal, traditional crafts and textiles including museum collections. She is also concentrating on development of prototype designs of handicrafts suitable to contemporary market trends.

As an academic visitor to Victoria and Albert Museum, London, she studied textile collections at the Museum with specific reference to embroidery.

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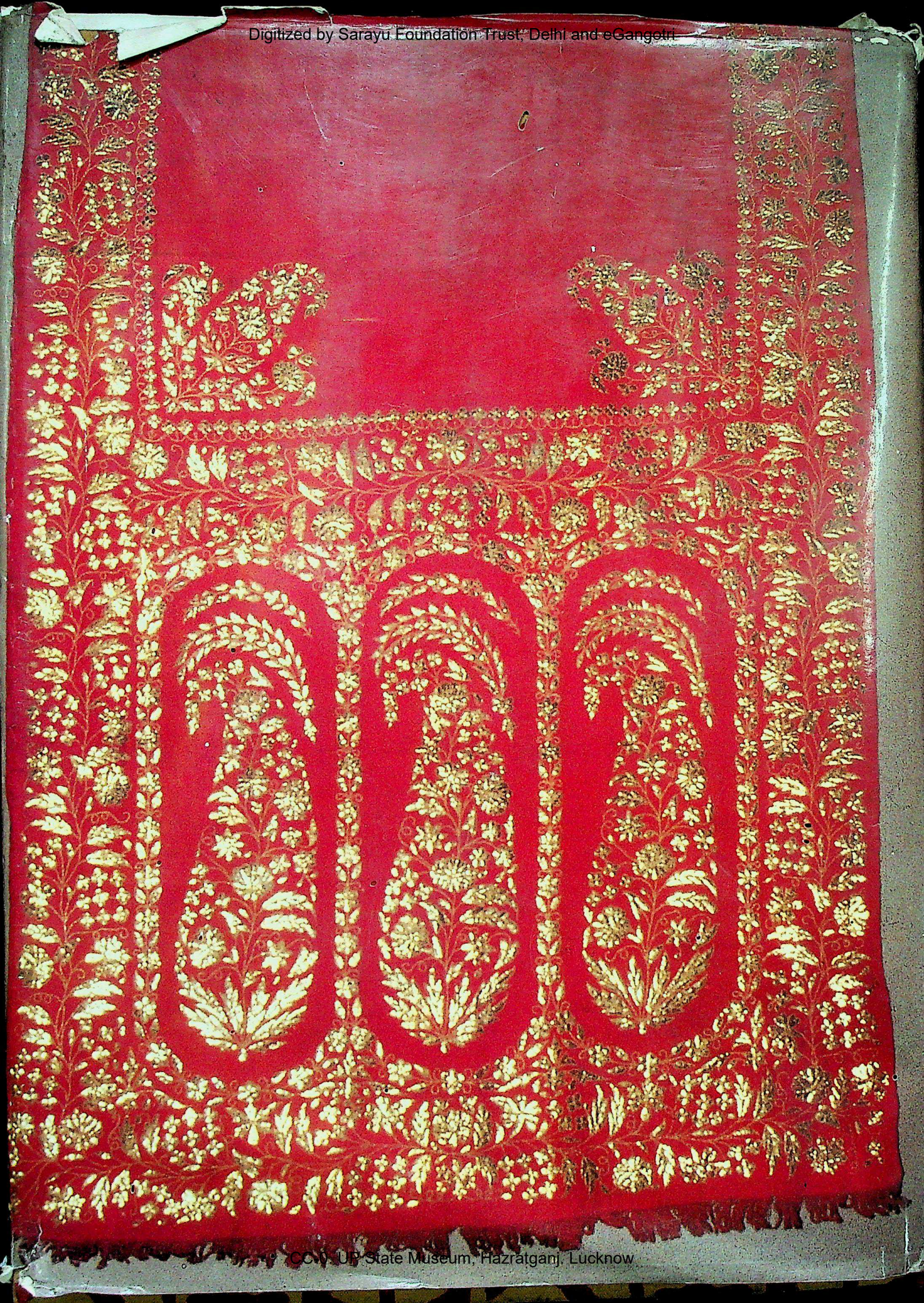

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